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EDITED

By GEORGE RIPLEY.

VOL. II.

CONTAINING

PHILOSOPHICAL MISCELLANIES,

FROM THE FRENCH

OF

COUSIN, JOUFFROY, AND BENJAMIN CONSTANT.

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As wine and oil are imported to us from abroad, so must ripe understanding, and many civil virtues, be imported into our minds from foreign writings;—we shall else miscarry still, and come short in the attempts of any great enterprise.

MILTON, *History of Britain, Book III.*

PHILOSOPHICAL MISCELLANIES,

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

OF

COUSIN, JOUFFROY, AND B. CONSTANT.

WITH

INTRODUCTORY AND CRITICAL NOTICES.

By GEORGE RIPLEY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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PHILOSOPHICAL MISCELLANIES.

Nec enim is solus reipublicæ prodest, qui candidatos extrahit, et tuetur reos, et de pace belloque censet; sed qui juventutem exhortatur; qui, in tantâ bonorum præceptorum inopiâ, virtute instruit animos; qui, ad pecuniam luxuriamque cursu ruentes prensat ac retrahit, et, si nihil aliud, certe moratur; in privato, publicum negotium agit.

SENECA, *de Tranquill. Vitæ*, Lib. I. Cap. III.

THEODORE JOUFFROY.

THEODORE JOUFFROY.

I.

ON THE METHOD OF PHILOSOPHICAL STUDY.

[PREFACE TO THE TRANSLATION OF DUGALD STEWART'S "OUTLINES OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY."][1]

1826.

THE exclusively successful study of the natural sciences, within the last fifty years, has given currency among us to the opinion, that there are no real facts, or at least none which are capable of being verified with certainty, except those which fall under the observation of the senses.

This opinion, connected with the principle of Bacon, that all which we can learn of reality is limited to the knowledge of the phenomena, by which it is manifested to us, and to the inductions which we can obtain from them, has led to the conclusion, in the first place, that the science of reality is reduced to *sensible facts* and to the inductions which they authorize, and in the second place, that the natural sciences are the only

[1] See Note A.

possible sciences, or at least that these alone are susceptible of certainty.

With some few exceptions, and those of recent date, this doctrine, at the present day, is universally admitted among those who are devoted to the study of the natural sciences.

They have deduced from it two distinct opinions, but each equally false, with regard to the philosophical sciences.

A part, taking it for granted that philosophical questions are not of a nature to find their solution in sensible facts, have concluded, without hesitation, that they are insolvable, and by the very sublimity of their objects, eternally abandoned to the caprices of opinion. Hence they have erased the philosophical sciences from the catalogue of the sciences, and treated them with indifference or contempt.

Others, drawing a different conclusion from the common doctrine, have attempted to resolve the questions of philosophy by the facts of sensible observation, or, in other words, to construct the philosophical sciences on the same basis with the natural sciences. Thus, in the hands of certain individuals, the physiological phenomena have been made the point of departure for ideology, ethics, political right, the science of religion and the philosophy of the Beautiful.

Both parties have found in their opinion concerning the philosophical sciences an explanation of the small progress, which these sciences have made; the former, denying that they can ever be elevated to the rank of sciences, the latter affirming that the proper course has not yet been taken to raise them to that dignity.

The certainty of the natural sciences having been proved by results no less magnificent than incontestable, the learned who are devoted to their study, are now the arbiters of opinion. Their sentiments on the philosophical sciences have therefore become popular, so that the public, at the present day, agrees with them in thinking that there is no certainty but in the facts which fall under the observation of the senses; and hence one of two things is inevitable, either that philosophical questions should be resolved by facts of this nature, or that they should remain for ever undecided.

This is the state of public opinion among us with regard to the philosophical sciences. Let us now give our own thoughts on the subject.

We fully admit with Bacon, that all which we can know of reality is reduced to the facts, which we observe, and to the inductions which we obtain from these facts with regard to the portion of reality, which escapes our observation. We will go still further, and add, that we obtain these inductions, by means of a certain number of truths or primitive axioms, which reveal to us what we do not see, in that which we do see, and without which, we could not pass beyond the facts that are actually observed. We are so strongly convinced of the truth of this doctrine, that we admit it, not because it is sustained by the authority of Bacon, but solely because in itself it represents an incontestable fact of human intelligence.

We are agreed, then, on this preliminary point, with the naturalists; but we do not believe with them, that there are no facts except those which fall under the observation of the senses. We believe that there are

facts of another nature, which are not visible to the eye, which cannot be touched by the hand, which neither the microscope nor the scalpel can reach, perfect as we may suppose them, which equally escape the taste, the hearing, and the smell, and which, nevertheless, are capable of being observed and verified with an absolute certainty.

Admitting facts of a different nature from sensible facts, we are obliged to admit also a kind of observation different from that which is exercised by the senses. We recognise, then, two kinds of observation, just as we recognise two kinds of facts.

Hence, we are not compelled to accept the maxim of the naturalists, that there is no certainty but in sensible facts and the inductions, to which they lead; nor their immediate inference that all human science is reduced to sensible facts, and to the inductions to which they lead; nor, finally, their more remote inference that the natural sciences are the only possible sciences.

We are not forced to believe, with them, either that the philosophical sciences are not sciences, if they cannot take their point of departure from sensible facts; or that they cannot become sciences, except by resolving the questions which they embrace, by sensible facts, that is to say, by becoming natural sciences themselves.

We believe, it is true, that the philosophical sciences do not yet merit the name of *sciences*, because they are still abandoned to the spirit of system, from which most of the natural sciences have hardly become free; but we believe that they are capable of becoming

sciences, and sciences no less certain than the natural sciences.

Nevertheless, we do not think, that in order to become genuine sciences, they must seek their basis in sensible facts; this is no more to be found in sensible facts, than the basis of chemistry in astronomical facts.

The questions of philosophy not relating to sensible reality, they cannot be resolved by sensible facts; but the reality which falls under our senses, is not, as the naturalists suppose, all reality; there is another reality which they forget, and it is precisely that to which the questions of philosophy relate. This reality is no less capable of being observed than sensible reality, though in a different manner; we discover in it facts of a different kind from sensible facts, and in which the natural solution of the questions of philosophy is to be found; and as these facts are no less certain than sensible facts, and admit of no less rigorous inductions; it follows that the philosophical sciences are susceptible of no less certainty than the natural sciences.

The error of the naturalists consists in not recognising this reality and this series of facts, which are beyond the reach of the eyes and the hands, and it is this which makes them unjust and false, when they reason concerning the philosophical sciences. The error of the philosophers consists in having neglected the observation of these facts, and in not having sufficiently comprehended that no certainty could be obtained on the questions of philosophy, except in this path; and it is this circumstance, which has kept the

philosophical sciences in their cradle and given them a bad reputation.

It would, accordingly, be important, in order to remove the prejudices of the naturalists and of the public against the philosophical sciences, to show that there are different facts and a different reality, from the facts and the reality which fall under the senses; and in order at length to place philosophy and philosophers in the path of certainty and of science, to demonstrate that all the questions of philosophy, whose solution is possible, are in the last analysis, questions of fact, no less than the questions of natural science, and belong exclusively, no less than they, to the jurisdiction of observation and induction. The best service, in our opinion, which could be rendered to the philosophical sciences, in France, would be to place these two truths in a clear light.

We at first proposed to attempt this in the present Essay. Such a labor appeared to us a necessary introduction to the valuable book whose translation we offer to the public; but we soon found that the subject was too vast for such a limited space. It would require a work entirely devoted to the subject, in order to treat it in its full extent and with all the developements which it allows. We have then decided, though with regret, to neglect entirely, the second part of this task, and to limit ourselves, in the following remarks, to the illustration of the truth, which is not recognised by the naturalists, that there is presented an order of phenomena to human intelligence, of which consciousness is the theatre, that are no less real, no less incontestable in the view of intelligence, than sensible facts,

though of a different nature, and the laws of which can be determined in the same manner, and verified with the same certainty. If this point is once established in the mind, there will be no disagreement with regard to the two other truths, whose developement we are compelled to omit; first, that all the questions of philosophy are resolved into the observation of these neglected phenomena, just as all the questions of natural science are resolved into the observation of sensible phenomena; and secondly, that though the questions of philosophy have been debated for three thousand years, and not one of them has yet been *definitively*, or what is the same thing, *scientifically* resolved, the reason is that philosophers have hitherto neglected to make the phenomena of consciousness the object of a regular science, and have scarcely studied them at all, except for the sake of obtaining inspiration for their systems and a foundation for their adventurous theories.

I. ON THE PHENOMENA OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE POSSIBILITY OF DETERMINING THEIR LAWS.

It is a fact little noticed, since it is constantly repeated within us, and we become insensible to phenomena that are very familiar, but which no one can refuse to recognise, namely, that we are always informed of what is passing in our inward nature, in the impenetrable sanctuary of our thoughts, our sensations and our determinations. Whatever is accomplished by our intelligence, whatever is experienced by our sensibility, whatever is acted on and decided by our will, we are made acquainted with it at the moment,

we have the consciousness of it. When we are awake, there is nothing which appears to be able to suspend or to interrupt this consciousness of what is passing within us. Thus, at the very moment when my attention seems to be most completely absorbed in the contemplation of an external object,—at the moment when my intelligence, struck with the remembrance of some past occurrence, seems to be most exclusively occupied with calling up the circumstances, now dimly perceived, in which it took place,—in those moments of profound abstraction, when the mind devoted to a single object, becomes insensible to every thing else, it still retains sufficient liberty to notice its own operations and the impressions which it receives. That which surrounds us, that which addresses the senses, it sees no longer, it hears no longer, it has lost all sense of outward things; but it has preserved the consciousness of what is passing within it; and it is a proof of this, that if you suddenly ask me what I am employed about, I shall answer you, I can describe it to you. Put the same question, whenever you please, no matter to whom, you can always obtain a precise answer and that on the spot. The perception of what takes place within us is then continual. It is doubtful whether it be suspended in the most profound sleep; for whenever we are suddenly awaked, we feel that a train of thought is interrupted. It is not proved that it is destroyed even in a swoon. The numerous instances, in which it is demonstrated that we have dreamed, though we have no remembrance of it, clearly show that we can think, feel, desire, will, and be conscious of it at the moment, without any trace being left in the memory.

It is hardly necessary to observe that this continual perception of our inward state is not the work of the senses; this is evident of itself, and nobody is disposed to deny it. But it is important to remark, that of all possible convictions, there is no one stronger or more perfect, than that which is derived from this source. There could be nothing more absurd than to deny that a man suffers, when he feels that he suffers, that he desires a certain object, when he feels that he desires it, that he is occupied with a certain thought, that he recollects a certain person, that he forms a certain resolution, when he has within him the consciousness of all these facts. We regard every thing which this inward perception testifies to us, as possessing an incontestable certainty. The objects which our eyes see, and which our hands touch, do not seem to have a more decided reality than those which our consciousness reveals to us. We will not attempt, as has often been done, to elevate the authority of the inward consciousness above that of the outward senses; but we will assume as an incontestable fact, that, at least, they both have equal authority.

There is a very obvious reason for this equality. Whatever idea we may form of the intelligent principle in the human constitution, we cannot deny that it is naturally *one;* for, whatever ideas are presented to it, of whatever kind they may be, it compares them, distinguishes, associates, classes them; in a word, it operates upon them so as to show that they are combined, embraced and possessed by a single power. We are conscious, moreover, very distinctly, that it is not one intelligence which perceives external objects, and

another which takes cognizance of inward phenomena, one which recalls past events, and another, which reflects, compares and reasons. We feel, on the contrary, that it is the same principle which unites all these functions; this is one of the clearest decisions of our consciousness. If, then, it is the same intelligent principle which sees by the eyes, which perceives by the touch and the other senses, what passes around us, and which feels by the consciousness what passes within us, it is not surprising that we should have an equal confidence in the testimony of our consciousness and in that of our senses; for if our intelligence trusts itself when it regards the outward world, why should it not also trust itself when it looks within; and our intelligence remaining the same and seeing equally in both cases, how is it possible that it should not believe equally in the reality of the phenomena, which it discovers? It may remark that the organs of sense sometimes lead it into error, that the eyes, for example, submitted to certain physical laws, in some cases, make it see as round that which in fact, is square. But, once forewarned of these causes of error, which do not come from itself, but from its instrument, and having taken precautions against their influence, there is no longer any reason why it should believe less in what it sees than in what it feels, or less in what it feels than in what it sees. It is, then, not only a fact, but a necessity, which we can easily comprehend, that the same certainty should be ascribed to the information obtained by the senses and to that obtained by the consciousness.

The fact, which we have just proved, reveals to us

an important truth, namely, that our intelligence has two distinct views; one, of outward objects, through the medium of the senses, the other of itself and of the facts which pass before the inward tribunal, without any medium whatever. The former of these two views is *sensible observation;* the latter is *internal observation*, and is also called *consciousness* or the *inward sense.* There are then two modes of observation perfectly distinct, equally real and of equal authority. What we here affirm is no system, but a statement of facts as certain, as palpable as any in the world; and because the naturalists have recognised only sensible observation, without noticing the other, it does not follow that the latter exists in a less degree, or acts in a less degree, in them than in the rest of mankind, or ought the less to be acknowledged as an incontestable fact in human nature.

These two views or modes of observation, are, each in its sphere, special and distinct; so that the senses cannot penetrate into the sphere of consciousness nor the consciousness into the sphere of the senses. This fact is remarkable and merits our attention. Nothing that we feel within us is perceptible to the senses; nothing which the senses give us from without is perceptible to the consciousness. The phenomenon of *sensation* affords us a striking example of this. It is composed of two distinct parts. A material impression is produced by some external cause, on one of our organs; this impression is transmitted to the brain by means of the nerves, and the result is, sometimes a feeling of pleasure or pain, and sometimes a feeling and an idea. The necessity of the action of an exter-

nal cause on the organ and of the transmission of this action to the brain, by the medium of the nerves, for the production of the feeling and the idea, is made known to us by sensible observation; but all possible attention, aided by the best instruments, cannot reveal to it the feeling or the idea; these facts escape the notice of the senses. On the other hand, the consciousness is perfectly sensible of pleasure or pain, and clearly perceives the idea, but gains no notion of the organ, or the nerve, or the impression made on the one, or the transmission effected by the other. Without the information imparted by sensible observation, we should not have learned that the feeling and idea were preceded, in the body, by these circumstances.

The case is the same with the phenomenon of *voluntary motion;* we are conscious of our determination, but not of the muscular contraction which accomplishes this motion, nor of the motion itself. For what we call the *feeling of effort*, is nothing but the consciousness of the sensation, more or less painful, that is occasioned by the muscular contraction, and by no means, the perception of this contraction itself. All the physical circumstances, which operate in the production of motion, and motion itself, are revealed to us only by sensible observation, which, in its turn, is wholly incapable of perceiving the phenomenon of voluntary determination. Hence, in order to gain a complete knowledge of the phenomenon of sensation or of that of voluntary motion, we must consult both internal observation and sensible observation; neither is sufficient by itself. It is this incapability, which has compelled the physiologists, as we shall presently see, to recog-

nise the *facts of consciousness*. We thus perceive the impossibility, and consequently, the absurdity of pretending to form a science of man, either according to the mode of the philosophers, with consciousness alone, or to that of the physiologists, with sensible observation alone. But to return to our subject.

The incapability of consciousness to perceive sensible phenomena and that of sensible observation to perceive the phenomena of consciousness, is too remarkable a fact, not to be made the subject of investigation. It is clear, at first sight, why the senses do not perceive the internal phenomena, nor the consciousness, the phenomena of the external world. The external world not being within us, it is impossible for us to feel it there; and the internal facts not being exterior to the senses, it is impossible for us to see them or to touch them. But this explanation does not go to the bottom of the difficulty. For, on the one hand, what is the reason, that we have the feeling of voluntary determination and not that of muscular contraction; and on the other hand, that the physiologist with his microscope and scalpel, can discover muscular contraction, but is wholly unable to perceive voluntary determination? In order to resolve this twofold question, we must, in the first place, form a correct idea of consciousness. What is consciousness? It is the feeling which the intelligent principle has of itself. This principle has the feeling of itself, and hence, the consciousness of all the changes, all the modifications, which it undergoes. The only phenomena, then, of which it can have the consciousness, are those which are produced within itself. Those which are produced

beyond itself, it can see; but it cannot feel them, it can have no consciousness of them. It can, then, have the consciousness of its sensations, because it is itself which enjoys or suffers; of its thoughts, its determinations, because it is itself, which thinks and determines; but it can have no consciousness of muscular contraction, of digestion, of the circulation of the blood, because it is the muscle which contracts, the stomach which digests, the blood which circulates, and not itself. These phenomena, then, are precisely in the same relation to it as the phenomena of external nature; they are produced beyond it, and it can have no consciousness of them. Such is the true reason of the incapability of the consciousness to seize a multitude of phenomena which take place in the body, but which, on that account, are none the less exterior to the intelligent principle, to the real *me*. On the other hand, the phenomena of consciousness being only the inward modifications of the intelligent principle, that alone can perceive them, because it is that alone which experiences them, and because, in order to perceive them, it is necessary to feel them. For this first reason, the phenomena of consciousness necessarily escape all external observation. But there is still another reason why they escape sensible observation. If we reflect upon the subject for a moment, we shall perceive that there is an absolute difference by nature between the will and all the phenomena of consciousness on the one hand, and muscular contraction and all the phenomena which fall under the senses, on the other. Sensible objects and phenomena are manifested by appearances which take hold of the senses, such as

colors, odors, forms, resistances, motions or changes in space, all things which the senses are organized to apprehend. The facts of consciousness have none of these attributes. Thus, even if these phenomena were not modifications so intimate as to be taken cognizance of only by the subject which undergoes them; even if they were produced externally, and were brought within the sphere of the senses, they would still escape sensible observation, on account of their very nature. It is, then, doubly impossible for the physiologists, in their researches on the phenomena of life, ever to penetrate to the facts of consciousness. The senses can no more penetrate into the sphere of the consciousness, than the consciousness into that of the senses.

The essential difference which we have now described, between the facts of consciousness and sensible facts, by no means affects the equal reality and equal evidence of these two kinds of facts; and though the intelligence attains the one by the medium of the senses, and the others without this medium, we do not find that the observation of the facts of consciousness is more difficult or subject to other laws than that of sensible facts.

External objects equally strike the senses of a peasant and a naturalist; but the naturalist is distinguished from the peasant by the fact, that the former gives his attention to the objects, while the latter sees them without attending to them, or does not attend to them sufficiently to unfold all their elements. It is, then, by attention and a sustained and persevering attention, that the naturalist passes beyond the vague and imperfect knowledge of external objects, which is possessed

by the generality of men and arrives at a more distinct and accurate knowledge of their nature. The case is precisely the same with internal phenomena. Every man is perpetually informed of the existence within himself of a multitude of sensations, of desires, of intellectual operations, of voluntary determinations, which succeed each other without interruption. Thus every man has a confused idea of each of these facts of consciousness; he is not ignorant of what it is, to feel, to desire, to deliberate, to will, to love, to hate, to admire, to despise, to know, to comprehend, to remember, to believe. He has words to designate all these facts; he distinguishes them, he speaks of them; and even, when the occasion is presented, he disputes about them. And yet he has no more a precise and complete idea of these phenomena, though he has experienced them a thousand times, than the citizen of Paris, of the phenomenon of combustion, though he has seen a thousand times the wick of his candle lighted, and the wood consumed to ashes on his hearth. And why? Because he has given no attention to these internal phenomena. In order, then, to arrive at a clear and thorough knowledge of these phenomena, we must not be contented with the involuntary feeling which they produce, when they take place within us, but we must fix our attention upon them, or in other words, observe them. We accordingly, see that the case is the same with the facts of consciousness as with sensible facts. They are manifested of themselves, and alike to the intelligence of all men, who thus involuntarily obtain a confused idea of them; but this idea is not scientific, because it is neither precise nor com-

plete ; it is only by the voluntary and attentive consideration of the phenomena, that the observer can elevate this vague and unfinished idea to the exactness and dignity of scientific knowledge.

Now it is an undeniable fact, that our attention is far more willingly directed to external objects than to inward phenomena. Is this merely the result of habit, or partly the effect of nature ? Here is a question, on which different opinions may be formed. For when we consider, what a multitude of wants tend to fix the attention of the child, and to retain that of the man, upon external things ; what a variety of objects are presented to his curiosity and to his passions by the social relations and the exhaustless compass of nature ; we shall be forced to acknowledge, that even if we had no natural inclination to turn our attention upon outward objects rather than inward, the circumstances of our condition would be sufficient to impart this direction to our intelligence. And yet on the other hand, whether we are deceived by the power of habit, or whether the instinct of our intelligence naturally impels it to look without rather than to reflect upon itself, it would be difficult for a fair-minded man absolutely to reject the possibility of a primitive inclination. However this may be, the fact of the actual bent of the attention towards external things, is incontestable ; and it is, certainly, to this bent and to the paramount necessity of providing for the preservation of our lives and for the numerous wants of the body, that we must ascribe the preëminence which the natural sciences have obtained over the philosophical sciences in the intellectual dévelopement of humanity.

But although this tendency or habit explains the neglect which the facts of consciousness have hitherto suffered, it proves nothing against the possibility of observing them. A multitude of facts conspire to show, that although our attention, in its actual state, is habitually directed to external objects, it yet retains the faculty of reflecting on the internal phenomena and that its habitual direction is not a necessary direction. To say nothing of the celebrated men who in every age have possessed the faculty, to an eminent degree, of considering and distinguishing the internal phenomena, it is demonstrated by experience, that all the circumstances which serve to diminish the attraction, that is exercised upon our intelligence by external things, as well as those which awaken its interest or curiosity concerning the internal phenomena, do, in fact, freely withdraw it, to a greater or less degree, from its accustomed paths. It is, thus, on the one hand, that the silence which leaves the ear in repose, the darkness which shuts out the perceptions of sight, the solitude which removes us from the excitement and bustle of society, naturally direct our attention within the hidden sphere of consciousness. A cold and unimpassioned temperament, comparatively insensible to external impressions, often produces the same effect on those who possess it. Another circumstance which leads to reflection, is natural scenery of a uniform and gloomy character, repelling, if we may so speak, the outward overflowing of intelligence, and turning it in upon itself; and, if we find, accordingly, that the inhabitants of the North have more inclination and capacity for metaphysical studies than those of the

South; if the phenomena of the soul hold a more important place in the poetry of the one and the phenomena of nature in that of the other, it is to be ascribed to the combined influence of these two last causes. On the other hand, the penetration which is suddenly acquired, in matters of inward observation, by the least reflecting persons, when the facts of consciousness accidentally assume an unusual vehemence, or a powerful interest impels them to their study; the faculty, for instance, which is manifested by lovers, of analyzing their feelings with a profound subtilty, and describing them with astonishing fidelity; the acuteness, with which a man who is afraid of contracting a disease, distinguishes, in certain parts of his body, the imperceptible sensations which habitually take place, but to which he had never before given the slightest attention; these and a thousand other facts of this nature, are convincing proofs that if the knowledge of the internal phenomena is yet in its infancy, it is not so much the power of observing them which is wanting, as the idea of making them the subject of a methodical study and of a regular science.[1]

Every man is able to verify in himself the correctness of this assertion. In truth, there is no one, how-

[1] The physiologists consider the ideas which come to us from without as naturally clearer than those which come from within.* This is evidently an error. If we have clearer ideas of external objects, it is because our attention is more exclusively occupied with them; when the attention has been educated, when it has been directed to the observation of the internal phenomena, the perceptions of consciousness are no less clear, than those of the senses.

* *Elemens de Physiologie*, par M. Magendie. T. I. p. 170.

ever little he may wish it, who cannot remark what he feels in himself, and acquire a more precise idea, than he had before, of the different operations of his intelligence, of the different movements of his sensibility and the other habitual phenomena of his consciousness. Here is a commencement of inward observation. Whenever any one shall thus fix his notice upon himself, he will perceive that he no longer gives his attention to external things, that his senses have become dumb and impart no information, except in a vague manner, of the phenomena which strike them. Soon, no doubt, the intelligence will rebel against this new exercise, will give way to fatigue, and following other impulses, will resume its accustomed direction. But new efforts will gradually prepare it for this reflective contemplation; the duration of its observations will be increased; it will become less susceptible to external distractions; the facts of consciousness which it at first but obscurely felt in their rapid transition, will submit themselves to more accurate examination; it will discern circumstances which it did not perceive before; that which appeared simple will be decomposed; that which appeared similar will be distinguished; a great number of facts which it had not suspected will be revealed to it; in a word, if the individual, who makes these trials upon himself be endowed with a natural talent for observation and a moderate share of perseverance, he will acquire in less time than would be supposed, an astonishing power of inward attention; and in this unknown world, which presents only to the consciousness of the generality a mass of indistinct phenomena, he will see opening before him, a

vast and attractive prospect, crowded with innumerable facts, in which the highest questions that the human mind can agitate, will naturally find their solution.

But it must be confessed, that though all men are more or less capable of pursuing this inward investigation, and of deriving instruction and pleasure from it, it will not present any truly scientific results, unless it be carried on by those who are familiar with the processes, the methods, and the rigid exactness of the sciences of observation. Observers like Vauvenargue or La Bruyère will not do. In truth, the question is not how nature conducts, or what forms it assumes, in a particular case. This is only a temporary manifestation, which, varying with circumstances, does not belong to the jurisdiction of science. The problem is, to discover what is constant, regular and invariable in its operations; and in order to do this, it is not enough to surprise it, we must know how to interrogate it. We must put it to the proof, if the expression may be allowed, in different instances, we must make it repeat an operation under various circumstances, so as to distinguish those which are changing, which belong to time, place, and a thousand accidental causes, and which must be left to the painter of manners, from those which are constant, which belong to human nature itself, and which should find a place in science; in a word, in order to construct the science of internal facts, we must first know how to institute judicious experiments. But this is not all. The majority of philosophers know how to experiment, and seek, in the study of man, only the immutable forms of his nature. Descartes, Leibnitz, Locke, did not contemplate the

inward scene from the same point of view with La Bruyère; and yet they did not succeed in establishing the science of internal facts. The reason is, that an ability to observe is not enough, that besides this, there is needed the courage to see nothing in the facts that are presented, but what really exists, and to draw from them no inductions which are not their rigorous consequence. It will not do, to have a crowd of questions in our head, which we are in haste to resolve and which we wish to resolve in a particular manner; it will not do, for the sake of satisfying our impatience or proving our opinion, to extort from facts, by the force of ingenuity and imagination, such solutions as we want, but which they do not give; it will not do, in a word, to observe with the spirit of system and to mingle poetry with science. We must be wise enough to understand that the best means of resolving questions of fact, in a solid manner, is to forget the questions in the observation of the facts, so as to verify the latter with impartiality and precision; we must also understand that the field of facts is immense, that a long time is required to explore it, and that, nevertheless, the neglect of the most minute circumstance is sufficient to vitiate the solution of a question. We should then, perhaps, be willing to lose sight of the questions, for a season; we should, perhaps, be contented to limit our efforts to the observation of facts, by which hereafter the questions may be resolved; we should, perhaps, at least be satisfied with obtaining from the facts provisional solutions, to be corrected in proportion as new facts are presented which prove their incompetence or inaccuracy. These are the

principles, in which philosophers have been deficient, and which ought to penetrate all who apply themselves to the science of external facts,—a science which hitherto has never been realized. So long as these rigid maxims, so long as these circumspect habits, which have taken deep root in the minds of the naturalists, and which have conducted the sciences which they cultivate to such positive and incontestable results, shall not have gained possession of the minds of the philosophers, the science of internal facts will never depart from the cradle, and the questions which it involves will remain the prey of the caprices of opinion.

But in entering with this spirit upon the study of internal facts, we shall soon be convinced that every thing which has been attempted and accomplished concerning sensible facts, can also be executed, and that in a manner no less solid and scientific, concerning facts of an opposite description. In truth, what is the precise problem, if these facts, as experience proves, are capable of being observed? To ascertain their laws, and these laws being ascertained, to draw from them inductions for all the questions which they involve. What other limit is reached by the natural sciences? Or, does any one doubt that these facts are produced according to regular laws? Would it not be truly remarkable that when all the facts, which have hitherto been observed in every part of nature, have been found subject to regular laws; that when the existence of order has been recognised, both in the sublime whole and in the most minute details of this vast universe, the operations of the human mind which verify this order, the movements of human sensibility

which admire it, and the motives of the conduct of man, who is the most wonderful portion of this vast whole, should alone be left to hazard, with no regularity, with no certain laws? Of all conceivable suppositions this were clearly the most absurd, even if it were not set aside by experience; but it is sufficient to have observed, even in the most superficial manner, a single phenomenon of consciousness, in order to have no doubt upon this point. Who has not perceived,—to take none but the most simple examples,—that we never adopt a resolution without a previous motive, that a recollection is never awakened, which is not called up by an idea previously present in our mind to which it is related, that our attention is never applied to an object of which we have not already acquired some notion? And if it be proved by observation that these three circumstances constantly accompany, the one the fact of volition, the other that of memory, and the third, that of attention, are they not the laws of these operations? Do the natural sciences proceed in a different manner, or obtain different results?

We may remark, moreover, in favor of this new science, of which the possibility is contested, that the experiments to be made on the internal phenomena, admit far more facility in the execution and promise far more exactness in their results, than those to which the greater part of the natural sciences are limited. For, to commence with physiology, how many phenomena escape its notice, so that it is obliged to have recourse to conjecture, in its inability to penetrate the mysteries of life, without destroying it? And are not those which it succeeds in attaining, most generally

sophisticated, by the painful operations which are required to observe them? And it is not even on man, who is the subject of the problem, but on animals, that the observations are made. Who does not know the difficulties which are presented by the comparatively easy experiments of physics and chemistry? Whether by reason of the subtilty of the phenomena, which escape our senses, or of the innumerable external influences which sometimes interfere with the experiment, so as to render it impossible, and sometimes modify and vitiate its results, so as to impose the necessity of the most varied counter experiments? We can hardly, indeed, imagine how much time, sagacity, patience, and skill in experimenting, have been put in requisition by the least discoveries in these two sciences. And what shall be said of those sciences, which are obliged to traverse the earth in order to verify a fact, to wait for the revolutions of the planets in order to make an observation, to bring together a multitude of different objects, that are scattered on the surface of the globe, or buried in its deep recesses, in order to discover a law of living or of inanimate nature? And when we see these prodigious obstacles, in the different branches of natural science, surmounted by genius and perseverance, how can we doubt concerning the prospects of the science of internal facts, which presents neither such difficulties to be conquered, nor such causes of error to be shunned? In truth, as the ultimate end of this science is to become acquainted with man rather than with men, and as man exists entire in each individual of the species, in whatever social position the observer is found, he bears within himself the

whole object of his studies, the complete subject of his experiments. He needs not, like the physiologist, to disturb the functions of life, or to place its continuance in peril, in order to observe its phenomena. On the contrary, to perceive the internal life, we need only leave it to its natural action; in proportion as this is secured, it is made the spectacle for observation. Now it is constantly developed with the whole retinue of phenomena which manifest it, so that the observer who carries it with him wherever he goes, is able, at all times, in every place, without preparation as well as without disturbance, to bestow upon it his attention, and to pursue the course of his researches. To discover the laws of these phenomena, there is no need that he should invent elaborate experiments; he would vitiate the natural character of the phenomena by producing them expressly in himself. It is enough to acquire the habit of observing them when they are naturally produced; he need not be troubled about the rest. When this habit is acquired, let the philosopher live like other men, let him mix with the world, let him cultivate society and attend to his affairs. The moving theatre of life, the varied excitements of social intercourse, will constantly call forth the developement of the phenomena, whose laws he is investigating. In this unceasing course of natural experimenting, the same fact repeated for several times under different conditions, will soon exhibit the invariable and constant element which it involves, it will show itself abstracted from the accidental circumstances which modify it in different cases, and will be seen by the observer, without effort, in its primitive and constituent essence.

Let no one, however, be deceived on this point. We do not pretend to reduce philosophy to this passive and indifferent observation of phenomena. It is not at so cheap a rate that science is gained. We have been taught by experience, it is true, that in the study of internal facts, we obtain no advantage by running after them; we must wait for their approach and surprise them as they pass by, if we wish to see them in their natural form. But it, by no means, follows that the observer should abandon his discoveries to chance. He must have a premeditated plan of research; he must propose successively, in an order before arranged, the different questions of fact, which it belongs to the science to resolve; so as not to be occupied with many things at once, and not to give his attention, at a specific moment, to more than one species of phenomena; he will otherwise be lost in the immense variety of internal facts, and will surround himself with mist instead of light. Neither should he stop with the simple, but incomplete notion, which is given to his intelligence by a rapid survey of the facts; meditation should brood over it with its wings, and quicken it into life. It belongs to this to give it precision, to develope and to fructify it; it belongs to this to examine whether the notion be complete and satisfactory, or whether it be necessary to repeat the observation, to interrogate the phenomenon anew; it belongs to this, also, to compare the particular laws in order to penetrate to the general laws, and thence, if possible, to the nature of the principle or of the living subject of all this vast outward developement; it belongs to this, in fine, to complete the process of induction.

Hence we perceive that the sagacity of the observer is as necessary in this kind of research as in any other. But it is nevertheless true, not only that the discovery of the law by experiment, in the science of internal facts is possible, but that in every respect, it admits of greater facility and promptness than in the natural sciences.

Finally, to complete the parallel, is it thought that when we have discovered the laws of the internal phenomena, we can obtain no important inductions from them, with regard to interesting problems? We observed, at the outset, that in our opinion, there was no philosophical question which did not find its solution in the knowledge of some of these phenomena. But the proof of this fact would demand developements from which we are obliged to abstain; we will accordingly confine ourselves to a single remark. The facts of consciousness, like those which are established by physiology, are facts of human nature. Without stopping here to discuss their relative importance, it will be admitted at least that the phenomena of intelligence, of volition, of sensibility, hold as high a rank in the constitution of man as those of digestion or of secretion. Now if the discovery of the laws of the latter furnish important inductions for the solution of the numerous problems which have man for their object, is it possible that a knowledge of the internal facts should cast no light upon these problems? If the sciences of anatomy and physiology are indispensable to medicine, because the diseases of the body cannot be treated without an acquaintance with them, is it not clear that the science of the facts of consciousness

must render the same service to education, to logic, to ethics, and thus lead to practical utility, not less important and incontestable? This presumption is so strong, that we see no necessity of adding any thing at present in favor of our opinion.

We can then determine, in a scientific manner, that is to say, by observation and experience, the laws of the internal phenomena; we can, also, obtain from them, by logical reasoning, valuable and rigorous inductions. The science of internal facts is therefore placed in the same condition with that of sensible facts; the only difference is, that the facts of consciousness are of a different nature from sensible facts, and are presented, by a different process to the notice of intelligence. But what matters it that these phenomena have different natures, if they be equally real? What matters it, that the former are perceived through the medium of the senses, and the others without this medium, if we can ascribe the same certainty to both modes of perception? Now, we have demonstrated the equal reality of these two orders of facts, and the equal authority of the consciousness and the senses. What remains, then, to oppose to the possibility of the science of the internal phenomena, except that it is an unheard-of thing, which cannot, at least, among us, boast the sanction of experience, and the encouragement of any successful attempts? But who does not feel the childishness of the objection? Who does not perceive, that it might have been made, not long ago, to the greater part of the natural sciences? For ourselves, we own that we see no good reason, for not applying, to the study of the facts of consciousness,

the scientific method, by which so much progress has been made in the study of sensible facts; and we trust that after our arguments shall have been weighed, every discreet and unprejudiced mind will be of our opinion.

II. ON THE COMMUNICATION AND THE PROOF OF THE NOTIONS OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

That it is possible for the observer to detect the facts which are produced in his consciousness and to determine their laws, and that this knowledge once acquired can have the same certainty in his eyes, with that of the knowledge of sensible facts in the eyes of the naturalist,—these are truths, which seem incontestably to follow from the preceding considerations; but, when the nature of the facts of consciousness is compared with that of sensible facts, it may still be asked, whether the science, as it has been formed in the mind of the observer, can be communicated to others and assume an external position like the natural sciences? Sensible facts can be exhibited; hence the student of natural science who has verified a phenomenon, can easily impart the notion which he has acquired, and demonstrate its exactness; hence, also, there is a more prompt agreement with regard to them, and the truth in matters of this kind, is soon so clearly recognised, that it does not long remain the private opinion of its discoverers, but passes rapidly to the rank of an authentic article of science. But the facts of consciousness being of a different nature, of a nature which does not allow them to be pointed out to the sight, it would

appear that the observations of the philosopher are incapable of demonstration. It is not even clearly perceived how he can make others comprehend what he feels himself. And, then, is there not reason to fear, that it belongs to the very essence of internal discoveries, to remain merely opinions, incontestable, it is true, for the discoverer who has observed the facts, but which, necessarily escaping all external demonstration, can never obtain that scientific authority, to which natural discoveries are elevated, and on account of which nobody thinks of doubting, or calling them in question?

This leads us to examine, on the one hand, by what method the notion of an internal fact is communicated and proved; and on the other hand, whether it be true, as is usually supposed, that it is impossible to advance our conceptions of internal facts to the scientific authority which is possessed by our conceptions of sensible facts.

The process of teaching and of demonstration in matters of internal fact, is perfectly familiar to us all; we constantly exercise it every day of our lives, and with no less success than confidence, but we take no notice of it, because it is apparently a trivial act. When we wish to communicate to another the idea of a sensible fact, we are in one of these three predicaments; we can either point out the fact and then we do so; or we cannot point it out, and then we have this alternative; the individual has either seen the fact or he has not seen it; if he has not seen it, he is obliged to trust to our testimony, if he has seen it, we appeal to his memory in order to convince him; we

describe the fact in question, with every possible detail, so that he may recognise the characteristic circumstances, and accord with us in the idea, which we wish to convey. This last procedure, which is accidentally employed in the case of natural facts, and by means of which, two persons, who have seen the same phenomenon, agree with regard to its nature, is, precisely, the habitual procedure, for the communication and proof of internal facts. We have already said, that nothing passes within us, of which we have not the consciousness; there is, accordingly, no internal phenomenon (and we speak here of the constituent phenomena of our nature which alone possess any interest for science); there is no phenomenon, we say, which the humblest peasant as well as the wisest philosopher has not often experienced and felt. This blind and transitory feeling is, certainly, not sufficient for the production of exact ideas; otherwise, the science of the internal phenomena would be formed in every consciousness; nevertheless, it leaves some traces behind it; it impresses the understanding with certain faithful notions, though vague and confused, of all the internal phenomena; and it is by the aid of these notions that every man is more or less capable of describing his own feelings and comprehending those of others when they are described. The facts of consciousness, then, are not unknown facts for any one; before the philosopher observes them with attention and describes them with precision, he has, and so has every body else, a confused idea of them. It is to this recollection of impressions, which have been a thousand times experienced, that the philosopher addresses

himself, whether engaged in teaching or writing, in order to communicate and establish his discoveries. Whatever be the phenomenon which he has observed, and which he wishes to describe, it is not unknown even to the generality of men; all that is required is to direct the memory of his hearers or readers to the traces of this fact, so that they may recognise it for themselves. And, to do this, he ought not at first to present the idea, in a state of analysis and abstraction; the phenomenon will not be recognised in this shape; it is the feeling which every body has of it that he ought to portray, and in the expressions and images which are employed by the mass; and in this popular costume, it will be recognised by the consciousness of all. Now as soon as you have gained this first point and fixed the remembrance of the hearers on the fact in question, there is but a single difference between you and them; namely, they have a confused idea of the phenomenon, and you have a distinct idea of it. But why have they only a confused idea of it? For no other reason, than that they have never attempted to unfold its elements. Their notion contains all the elements of the phenomenon; but as they have not been separated and distinguished by reflection, their notion, if we may use the expression, is all of a piece; it is the idea in its cradle; the idea, not yet analyzed; the idea in its primitive form, while it can still be called only an *impression*, a *feeling*. Your precise notion, then, is only the analysis of their confused notion; it is the same word, which is badly written in their intelligence, distinctly written in yours. In order, then, to lead your hearers or your readers to

the precise notion, which you wish to communicate to them, you have only to direct their attention to the elements of their own confused notion, elements which that notion involves, but which, through want of attention, they have never remarked; and to succeed in this, you must start from their impression, and gradually disengage with them the facts which enter into it, so that they can always recognise the agreement between that which you tell them, and that which they feel themselves; until at last their vague and concrete notion is transformed into a precise and analytical idea, exactly such as you wish to communicate to them.

And observe here that this procedure not only communicates your idea, but also demonstrates it. You do not impose your own consciousness on your hearers or readers, you lead them to gain the same knowledge that you have yourself, and in the same manner that you have gained it, namely, by the analysis of a confused notion, which they had in their minds as well as you. You are not a traveller who relates what he has seen in an unknown country; you are a demonstrator, like the professor of physical science, who makes others remark what he has remarked himself. The conviction, moreover, which accompanies the satisfactory demonstration of an internal phenomenon, is not a blind trust in the testimony of the professor; it is a reliance on the testimony of consciousness, which excited and directed, by the indications of the professor, remarks, in a phenomenon which it has often experienced, the actual circumstances, which it had never before distinguished. This conviction is of the same

nature and of the same force with that which accompanies the demonstration of a visible and tangible fact; the only difference being, that, in the one case, it is the memory, which verifies the indications of the professor, and in the other, the senses.

It is hardly credible, in how many circumstances of life, this communication of internal notions is effected, accompanied with a perfect conviction, but altogether without our notice. It is not an extraordinary fact, but one which takes place every day, almost every moment. It is repeated whenever two persons communicate to each other their inward sentiments. When a friend describes to his friend what he has experienced in a certain situation, if the latter comprehends him, if he has a distinct conception of what the other portrays, it is because he calls to mind similar impressions of his own; never having been deeply affected by them, he has never remarked all their details; but, with the description of his friend, he recognises them, he developes them, he clearly comprehends them. It is in this way, that individuals, who have little skill in inward analysis, perfectly understand the pictures of the human heart, which they find in moralists and romances. But this phenomenon is nowhere more plainly to be seen, than in the representations of the stage. Observe with what universal and lively sympathy, the spectators welcome those fresh touches of nature which are so admirably expressed in the comedies of Moliere. There is no one, in such a numerous assembly, who has not often been conscious of these natural emotions of passion, in himself, and remarked their manifestations in others; and yet, with

almost all, these familiar observations, which have not been fixed and defined by reflection, have been abandoned as soon as received, and have left no distinct idea in the intelligence; but the memory has secretly preserved their impression, and when the painter of human nature brings them into notice by these touches of genius, every body acknowledges the truth of the imitation and testifies it by his applause. The representation of a tragedy or a comedy is, in fact, a course of inward observation. If the poet can communicate to the public, some fragments of the science of the human soul, so can the philosopher; and if the public is competent to estimate the truth or falsehood of the observations of the poet, it cannot be incapable of recognising the correctness of the analyses of the philosopher, provided that he is able to exhibit them in appropriate and expressive forms. As a general rule, when a philosopher fails of success with the public in the communication or the demonstration of his ideas, it is either because his observations are not correct or his forms are not intelligible.

Let us not, however, exaggerate; the phenomena of consciousness, like those of nature, present circumstances of two distinct kinds; the one, prominent and strongly marked, the other subtile, delicate, requiring no ordinary degree of attention. As to the latter, they equally escape the observation of the generality of men, in the facts of consciousness and in those of nature; one must be a naturalist or a philosopher, that is to say, an observer by profession, in order to distinguish them with certainty. But, as the professor of natural philosophy, or of chemistry, can always direct

the attention of his auditors to the principal circumstances of a phenomenon, so we have learned by experience that it is not difficult to call up in the consciousness, the remembrance of the prominent and striking circumstances of the internal phenomena. We have always found that these circumstances were easily remarked and clearly distinguished even by the least reflecting and the least cultivated minds. On the other hand, it is in vain to wish to alter the nature of these circumstances by false descriptions; unless we have obtained faithful observations, the mind will protest against their accuracy; without the ability to substitute more correct descriptions for those which you present, common sense will refuse to admit them; the consciousness of all, filled with a sentiment of truth which they cannot analyze, appears to be waiting for the approach of truth, in order to acknowledge it. But as soon as you have seized upon the true characteristics of the phenomenon, the general assent is no less prompt and lively than unanimous; your assertions respond so completely to what every body feels, that it becomes evident that your analysis is a faithful rendering of the common consciousness, which itself is nothing but a genuine copy of reality.

We have now presented what the limits of this article admit, with regard to the communication and the proof of the science of internal facts. It has been seen, that although this process is not the same with that of the natural sciences, yet it attains its end, that is to say, it communicates the idea and produces conviction. This process, undoubtedly, has its limits and imperfections; no internal notion can be communicated

to a hearer or reader who has never observed it; the idea of the philosopher is often imperfectly comprehended; the conviction of the hearer often incomplete; it is sometimes too yielding, sometimes deceived; but is the process of communication and proof in the natural sciences free from these difficulties? It is a question, whether it be more difficult for a professor of chemistry to deceive the eyes of his audience with regard to the circumstances of an experiment, than for a professor of philosophy to deceive the consciousness of his, with regard to the character of an internal phenomenon. It is another question, which of the two carries away the most precise idea, the pupil who has followed with his eyes a chemical experiment which he has not seen before, or he who has followed with his consciousness the description of an internal phenomenon which he has repeatedly experienced. After all, the notions of reality, as they are communicated by teaching are rarely exact, and the convictions, which it imparts, are rarely sound and thorough. A professor indicates rather than teaches; and it is, for the most part, only the observer who can lay claim to actual knowledge and legitimate convictions.

This naturally leads us to inquire in what manner and upon what conditions, we can establish the authenticity of a truth relating to facts in the natural sciences, and to determine whether the truths relating to internal facts cannot also become authentic truths, that is to say, be made to possess a certainty, universally acknowledged.

As soon as a naturalist has discovered a new fact, he regards the reality of this fact as a truth; as soon

as he has announced his discovery, a presumption is raised in the public mind that the fact is true. This presumption is the effect of the natural confidence which we repose in human testimony ; the same which induces us to believe the accounts of travellers, who return from distant countries, or the evidence of a disinterested witness, with regard to a fact which no one has seen but himself. But this presumption does not force conviction, nor give a scientific certainty to the discovery ; else it would be sufficient to testify to a fact and to give a description of it, for it to be admitted into science as satisfactorily established.

The observer himself, moreover, does not demand that his assertion should be received merely on his own authority ; he has witnessed the fact, and it is because he has witnessed it, that he believes it ; but he invites others to establish their conviction upon the same foundation, that is to say, to see for themselves as he has ; and he shows them the means of doing so.

Accordingly, every one is called upon to verify the reality of the fact in question by his own observation. Now although nobody should be disposed to take this trouble, merely because the verification is offered and is within his power, the assertion of the naturalist assumes a probability far superior to that which can be claimed for the account of the traveller, or the testimony of the witness, the exactness of which cannot be verified by personal observation. Still this probability does not amount to certainty ; it is proved that the naturalist does not wish to deceive, but yet it is possible that he is deceived himself.

But, when other naturalists, that is to say, men of

acknowledged ability to distinguish all the circumstances of an experiment, have verified his observation, and have seen with their own eyes, the fact as he has described it; his assertion then obtains the authority of a scientific truth, because it becomes almost certain that its correctness will be demonstrated to all who will take pains to verify it. They who have gone through with this verification admit the fact; and they who have neglected it are convinced that they should arrive at the same result.

This is what is called *certainty*, in matters of sensible observation. In those, who have examined the fact, it is confidence in the testimony of the senses; in the public, it is confidence in the testimony of those who have examined. But the confidence of the public is not founded only on its opinion of the capability of the observers, on the unanimity and disinterestedness of their evidence; but still more on the peculiar circumstance that every body can verify the fact which is attested; it is this which makes it so strong and establishes a radical distinction between it and our confidence in human testimony, when applied to the facts of history.

This brief exposition of the conditions of certainty in the natural sciences, appears to us to resolve the question which we proposed. In fact, what is required for an observation to become a demonstrated truth? Not that its correctness should be verified by every body, but that it should be recognised by men of science, and that it should be in the power of any one who chooses to verify it for himself. Now are not the facts of consciousness as accessible to the observation

of all philosophers, to all who will learn to remark what is passing within them, as sensible facts to all naturalists, to all who will learn to distinguish the circumstances of a physical experiment? Accordingly, when a philosopher presents the description of a phenomenon of consciousness, it is competent, not only to every other philosopher, but to every man whatever, to examine in himself the phenomenon that has been pointed out, and to verify the fidelity of the description that has been given. The verification is, then, in the power of all who are qualified to carry it on, that is to say, in the power of all, who wish to ascertain the fact. Now, there is nothing in the world more certain, than that the internal phenomena are subject to constant laws, and the same in every individual. The object of observation, then, being the same for all observers, and observation being possible, the observers cannot fail, with a proper degree of attention and good faith, of arriving at the same results, that is, at truth, with regard to internal facts, legitimately recognised, and established in an authentic manner.

There are certain points of internal observation, it is true, concerning which there can never be a complete agreement; these are circumstances, which escape not only the ordinary consciousness, but which are too subtile, too delicate, even for the philosopher to grasp with clearness and precision. They are the same in relation to internal feeling, as those sensible facts to the eye, which afford only indistinct glimpses to the most powerful microscope; each observer comprehends them in his own way, as he believes they appear to his sight, or as he believes he ought to view them. But, allowing this

class of obscure phenomena to be as large as you please, there will always remain a multitude of phenomena, in the internal world, which are manifested with so much distinctness, that it is impossible to mistake their nature, and a variety of others, on the circumstances of which it is no less difficult to err, whenever they are studied, with a tolerable share of attention and perseverance. Now, we not only believe that philosophers can come to an understanding on this class of phenomena, but the contrary seems so destitute of probability, that we cannot even conceive of it.

The only condition necessary, in our opinion, for obtaining a clear understanding with regard to the nature of an internal phenomenon, is that the discoverer should give an exact description of it, and present with care the circumstances, in which he has observed it. In fact, if he neglect either of these points, they who wish to verify his experiment, will be apt to direct their inquiries to another phenomenon, or, if they do not mistake the phenomenon, to observe it in different circumstances; and in that case, they will not find what he has found,—not that the nature of the internal phenomena varies in one consciousness and another, not that they cannot be precisely discerned, but that it is impossible for two observations to agree, when they are not applied to the same object. This, in our opinion, is the sole reason of the differences among philosophers with regard to the phenomena of consciousness. Hitherto, philosophers have not taken the trouble to describe the internal phenomena with care, nor above all to mark with accuracy the circumstances in which they have observed them. As the

result of this, they have not understood each other. Each speaking of a different phenomenon, or of a different aspect of the same phenomenon, they have all been led to different descriptions, which have occasioned interminable disputes. Thus, since the origin of philosophy, three or four distinct opinions have been maintained, with equal success, concerning the fact of liberty and that of certainty. If we examine with attention all the contradictions of philosophy with regard to internal facts, we shall soon be convinced that it is not of the same facts that philosophers entertain different ideas, but of different facts which they call by the same name. It is not because it is impossible or even difficult to describe an internal fact so well, that it can be easily recognised, but only because philosophers are unwilling to take this trouble. And the reason is, that the knowledge of facts is not the end which they have in view. They think only of solving certain controverted questions, they do not have recourse to facts, except by accident, and for the purpose of justifying the solutions, which they have adopted. Hence it happens, not only that they do not stop to describe them faithfully, but moreover, that the portion which agrees with their preconceived opinion, is all which they deem it worth while to notice or represent.

We can draw no valid conclusions against the possibility of a science of the internal phenomena, from what has been done or from what has not been done in philosophy up to this time, because philosophy never having taken the observation of these phenomena for its immediate end, has never adopted the measures necessary for their verification. It is an experiment

which proves nothing, because it was badly performed; we must, consequently, abide by the indications which are given by the very nature of things. Now we find that the internal facts are capable of being observed; we are assured that they are the same in every consciousness; it is true, they cannot be exhibited to the sight, but they can be described, so as to be clearly designated to any one who is willing to observe them. Accordingly, we think that all these circumstances show, that a truth, relating to an internal fact, can be verified with no less certainty than a truth relating to a sensible fact. The fact, observed by a philosopher, can be designated, with precision, to every body else; all can then verify his observation by an appeal to the reality; if they find it exact, of course, they are agreed; if they do not find it exact, they can indicate, in their turn, all the circumstances of the phenomena which they think omitted or perverted; and as the fact is the same, in the consciousness of all, it is impossible but that they should finally come to an agreement. Hence it is clear that the notion which has been formed of this fact, has the same title to public confidence, and the same scientific certainty, as the notion of the best authenticated sensible fact; we can see no difference in the two cases, except that the one, which represents an internal fact, must have been verified by consciousness, while the other, which represents a sensible fact, has been verified by the senses. So far as we pursue the parallel between the two sciences, we always fall upon this fundamental distinction between the phenomena of consciousness and sensible phenomena; and this always occasions a difference in the method, but by no means affects the equal certainty of the results.

We will add a single observation in closing the discussion of this topic. Though it is possible to verify an internal fact in the same manner with a sensible fact, and to furnish the notion of this fact with the same guarantees of exactness, it must still be admitted, that these guarantees, which are deemed sufficient titles to authenticity, in regard to sensible facts, will appear unsatisfactory in regard to internal facts. If ten natural philosophers attest a natural phenomenon, the public is perfectly convinced; but we have no belief, that the same conviction would follow, if ten philosophers were agreed as to the characteristics of a fact of consciousness; though there is no doubt, that it ought to follow, since the grounds of conviction are the same. This difference proceeds in the first place from the prejudice, which we have attempted to combat in this Preface, that the facts of consciousness cannot be verified with certainty; then, from the unhappy impressions which have been made upon the mind by the eternal dissensions of philosophers; and finally, and still more decidedly, from the facility itself, with which every body can verify internal observations. In fact, as soon as the phenomena of consciousness are spoken of, every body believes that he has not only the right, but also the ability to pronounce a judgment. There are no persons exclusively qualified here as in the natural sciences; every body trusts only to himself and claims to determine whether what is advanced be true or false; this, no doubt, is a great mistake; for though all men have the consciousness of the internal phenomena, all men are not accustomed to notice, to observe, to analyze them; there are few who are fami-

liar with the procedure of the experimental method, few who even know what is meant by the law of a fact, and fewer still who are capable of distinguishing it, amidst the variable circumstances which envelope it. This pretended universal competence, then, beyond certain limits, is nothing but a prejudice; still this prejudice exists; and hence, instead of receiving an internal observation, on the unanimous testimony of men of science, every one undertakes to criticise it, and that in the most superficial manner possible, according to imperfect recollections of former experience in such or such circumstances, without reflection, and without analytic skill. It is impossible, but that such verifications, often made in the crowd of a saloon, without forethought, without preparation, should terminate in contradictory results, the very diversity of which confirms the popular opinion, that the truths relating to the facts of consciousness, are individual in their nature, and cannot be held up for universal belief. It is for this reason, that the notions of internal facts, however legitimately verified, may for a long time, and until philosophers shall have demonstrated their competence by imposing labors, aspire in vain to the scientific authority, which is so easily obtained for the observations of naturalists. But, we repeat it, no positive conclusion can hence be drawn against the certainty of the science. The prejudices of the public against philosophy, like a thousand others, will vanish, as soon as pains are taken to bring them into discredit.

III. OPINIONS OF PHYSIOLOGISTS ON THE FACTS OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

Among the truths which we have endeavored to establish in the preceding considerations, the most important, those which serve as the foundation for all the rest, are actually recognised and more or less explicitly avowed by the physiologists. Indeed, they admit, in their writings, the reality of the facts of consciousness, the natural difference which distinguishes them from sensible facts, the necessity of submitting them to observation, and, finally, the possibility of verifying them with certainty. They go still further. They introduce into their science a certain number of these facts, which they admit, with the same confidence, and which they assume as equally incontestable, with the facts of human organization. This formal contradiction, given by the naturalists themselves to the maxim of their science, with regard to certainty, affords too signal a confirmation of what we have said, to allow us to pass it over in silence. It is well to show how the physiologists have been compelled, by the very nature of their researches, to recognise truths which have been generally denied or left out of view by the other naturalists. This will give us an occasion, moreover, to illustrate the principle of their method, of which—a curious fact in the human mind—they present no explanation, but which yet deserves to be set forth.

When we examine the procedure of physiologists in their study of the phenomena of life, we soon perceive that they are guided in this study, by an idea which is prior to their researches and which presides over

them, an idea which they deem true *a priori*, an idea which previously indicates to them the end which they should pursue, and the experiments required to attain it, an idea, in a word, which is the principle of their method, and without which they would never have discovered any thing, because they would never have sought for any thing. This is the idea of the constituent circumstances, or if you please, of the integrant and necessary elements of every phenomenon.

When you open the books of the physiologists, you perceive that the study of a phenomenon, or, as they express it, of *a function* of life, whatever it may be, consists, in their view, in the investigation of five principal circumstances; 1. the organ, which is the principle of the phenomenon; 2. the exciting cause, which determines the organ to produce the phenomenon; 3. the operation, by which the phenomenon is produced; 4. the phenomenon itself; 5. the final cause or end for which the phenomenon is produced.

To give our readers a clear idea of these five circumstances, let us take a single phenomenon, that of mastication, for example; the mouth, the tongue, the jaws with the muscles which move them, compose the organic apparatus or the organ of the function; hunger, inclination, the presence of food are the exciting causes, which determine the function to act; the grinding of the food, by the aid of the teeth and the tongue is the operation; the phenomenon, properly so called, is the change of condition in the food; the end of the phenomenon, is, first, the possibility of swallowing the food, secondly, that of digesting it, and lastly, the nourishment of the body.

It is not only true, that the study of a function, as regarded by the physiologists, consists in the determination of these five circumstances; but we can obtain from the examination of their method, as every one who has studied it will confess, the following results.

1. So long as these five circumstances have not been determined, they do not profess to be in possession of a complete idea of the function; now this is the case, with the greater part of the vital functions, and, for example, with the secretion of bile; of this function, only three circumstances are known, namely, the organ, which is the liver; the phenomenon, which is the secretion of bile; the end, which is digestion; but it is not yet known in what manner the bile contributes to digestion. As to the operation of secretion and the circumstances which determine it, we are completely ignorant. The phenomenon of mastication is one of the few, which we understand in all its circumstances.

2. As soon as all these circumstances are determined, the physiologists suppose that the function is perfectly known, and that all further investigation would be useless. This is actually the case, with regard to mastication; every body believes that all is known of this function which ever can be. In fact, the circumstances which determine the organ to act are well known; we understand how it is constructed, how it operates, what results from it, and the use of this result in animal life. We feel satisfied in our minds and demand nothing more.

3. So long as none of these circumstances is known in regard to a particular phenomenon, it is impossible to study it, because we cannot even suspect its exist-

ence. The discovery of the first element of a function, moreover, is always owing to chance, unless it is presented by nature, previously to the investigation of science. This is confirmed by the history of physiology.

4. But, again, as soon as one of these circumstances is given, the existence of all the others is demonstrated. The only problem then is to determine them; and it is in this conviction, and with the indications furnished by the known element, that the physiologists invent experiments adapted to discover the unknown elements. It is sufficient, for example, to discover a new portion of the body, in order to be sure that it is designed for some use, and consequently to seek the phenomenon which it produces, or which it helps to produce, the manner in which it produces it, the circumstances under the influence of which it produces it, and the end for which it produces it. In like manner, if we discover a new effect in the human body, we are at once sure that this effect is produced in a certain mode and for a certain end, by an organ which acts under the influence of certain controlling circumstances. Thus the discovery of the organ, or that of the effect, or that of either of the five elements of a phenomenon, is a sufficient proof of the existence of all the others; and it is because the known element reveals them, that we commence our investigation. In this way, the position of the valves of the veins conducted Harvey to the discovery of the phenomenon of the circulation of the blood.

5. Even when observation does not succeed in discovering all the circumstances of a function, the physiologists are by no means less certain that these cir-

cumstances exist. Thus, although the operation of the secretion of bile had never been detected, we should believe with no less strength of conviction, that an operation was carried on in the interior of the organ, for the production of bile.

Such are the principal characteristics of the method, pursued by the physiologists, in the study of the phenomena of life. It follows that all their processes are the consequence of a primary notion, which, in their view, has the evidence and the authority of an axiom, namely, that every possible phenomenon necessarily implies the five circumstances or elements, which we have designated. For, as long as they have not determined these five circumstances in the study of a function, they do not regard this function as completely known; but as soon as they have determined them, they regard the study of this function, on the contrary, as entirely finished; the instant, moreover, they know a single one of these circumstances, they begin to investigate the others; and, finally, even when they are unable to discover them all, they continue no less certain that these circumstances exist. And what proves that they justly regard these five circumstances as the constituent elements of every phenomenon, is the fact, that so long as one of them, at least, is not known, they must remain perfectly ignorant of the existence of the phenomenon, while on the other hand, as soon as one of them is discovered, the existence of the complete phenomenon is immediately demonstrated.

But how do the physiologists obtain this notion of the constituent circumstances of every phenomenon?

It is evident that it is not derived from physiology itself, since it is by virtue of this notion that their procedure is determined in the study of physiological phenomena. It cannot, moreover, be the experience that any specific phenomenon contains these five constituent circumstances, that has given birth to the notion; for we cannot infer from the fact that they have been observed in one or many phenomena, that they must necessarily be found in all. Now, such is the force of this notion, that the physiologists are certain that every possible phenomenon comprises these five elements; at least, they proceed as if they had no doubt on the subject. This notion, then, is not derived either from physiology or experience; it exists in the minds of the physiologists, prior to physiology itself; and since it is universal, applicable to all cases, we cannot suppose that it is merely the result of experience, because experience can never extend to all possible cases. When we consider the subject, we recognise in this notion one of those principles of common sense, one of those self-evident axioms, which are found, we know not how, in the understanding of all men, and which reveal to us, with a certainty, that we are inclined neither to examine nor contest, those truths, of which we have never had experience and which we can never verify.

Just as every change, that is, every phenomenon, is necessarily regarded by us as having a cause, so whenever a cause produces an effect, we know that it operates in a certain manner in order to produce it; and just as the idea of an operation is inevitably associated in our minds, with that of the production of an effect

by a cause, so it is impossible for us to conceive that a cause should act without a specific purpose, or that it should produce a useless effect. We regard every thing which takes place as having not only a *cause* but an *end*, not only an *end* but a *reason* for taking place; so that the idea of *change* or of *phenomenon* necessarily involves that of *cause*, of *operation*, of *end*, and of *sufficient reason*. Neither of these ideas can be separated from the rest; if one is presented, they are all presented; they form together the complete idea of the production of a phenomenon, and we cannot but believe that this idea is the true and universal expression of the nature of things. Hence, in the application, as soon as a phenomenon is exhibited to us by one of these constituent circumstances, we forthwith imagine all the others, and are convinced that they exist, whether we can discover them or not.

The principle of the method, pursued by the physiologists, is nothing but this natural conception of the constituent elements of a phenomenon, with the difference only that they see the cause in the organ, that is to say, in the part of the body, which is the scene of the production of the phenomenon. This modification is important and deserves to be further explained.

With the exception of the thinking and acting cause, of which we are conscious within us, every other cause escapes our observation. In the study of the phenomena of nature, accordingly, we are obliged to conceive the existence of causes, without being able to determine them. Hence the idea which we form of every cause is always the same, namely, that of a force

or principle which has the power of producing the effects which we behold. This idea comprises no material element; on the contrary, the difference is so great between the idea which we form of a force and that which we have of a body, that we are compelled to regard force as incorporeal by nature, although we can assume the hypothesis that it resides in a body, or even conceive of it as the property of a body. When, therefore, we see a phenomenon take place, and we begin to suppose the cause of it, we do not refer it to a body nor to a certain part of a body, but to an unknown force, the idea of which by no means implies that of body or of matter; such is the natural induction; and in physics, where the phenomena take place almost indiscriminately in every variety of bodies, we do not pass beyond this induction. But when an effect is always and exclusively manifested in a certain body or in a certain part of a body, we not only suppose a cause for it, but we conceive that the particular body or the part of the body, in which it is manifested, is organized with reference to the production of this effect; and this supposition is changed into conviction, when we perceive relations of affinity or dependence, between the organization of the body or the part of the body, and the effect which it constantly exhibits. This holds true with regard to all the specific phenomena of organized bodies. There is such a connexion between every phenomenon of this kind and the part of the body in which it is produced, that not only the phenomenon is never produced elsewhere, but besides, if the part be impaired or destroyed, the phenomenon also is impaired or destroyed. It is often possible,

even to perceive in what manner the construction of the material part contributes to the production of the phenomenon. In that case the idea of the phenomenon is associated, not merely as usual, with that of a force which produces it, but even with that of the material part which is the exclusive organ, and which seems to be the indispensable instrument of the production. As then, it appears evident, that the cause cannot operate without the organ, the cause is naturally placed by science in the organ itself; the organ which is visible becomes the representative of the cause, which is invisible, and at last, these two conditions of the phenomenon are confounded and identified.

It is in this way that the physiologists have been universally led to substitute the organ for the cause, in conceiving of the constituent elements of a phenomenon; for example, in the phenomenon of digestion, instead of distinguishing between the cause of digestion which is unknown, and the organ of digestion which is the stomach, they direct their sole attention to the stomach, which they regard as at once the principle and the instrument of the phenomenon. In the study of a particular phenomenon, we are no doubt brought to the same result, by thus taking the organ for the cause; since, on the one hand, as the cause is beyond our reach, we must limit our observation to the organ, and on the other, as the cause always acts by the medium of the organ, when we refer the phenomenon to the organ, we refer it to the cause. Still, as we can never impair the truth, without injury, this confounding of two ideas in the researches of science, that are essentially distinct, has inveigled the physiologists into

a perfectly hypothetical system, with regard to the principle of the phenomena of life. They have begun with making no distinction between these two ideas and have ended with considering their identity as an established truth. Each organ has become, in their view, the principle of the phenomena which it manifests; the stomach, of digestion; the liver, of bile; the brain, of thought. And as each organ is nothing but a collection of material particles, it cannot be explained how a force can be the result of this collection of particles, except by ascribing to the aggregation a power which is wanting to the elements; and conceiving that the particles,—which in themselves do not possess the property of thinking, of digesting, of secreting bile, since they do not retain it when the aggregation is dissolved,—merely by their orderly arrangement, constitute efficient causes that are capable of thinking, of secreting, of digesting. We must assume, in a word, that the vital force is the result of a multitude of particular forces, which are themselves, each the result of the particular organization of the different corporeal organs. Now a theory like this is a mere hypothesis. For if we consider it as demonstrated, that the organ is indispensable to the production of the phenomenon, there is no fact, nor induction, nor analogy, which authorizes us to believe, that the organ is the principle of this production. The supposition of the distinction between the cause and the organ is not only in perfect accordance with facts, but it can be easily proved, that it does not involve the contradictions which are found in the other hypothesis, nor the strange consequences, to say the least, which proceed from it.

In fine, whatever opinion we may adopt as to this particular question, it is evident, that the organ of the physiologists is nothing but the unknown cause of the phenomenon, identified, whether right or wrong, with the part of the body, in which the phenomenon is manifested. We cannot but recognise, in the idea which presides over their researches, the absolute notion of the constituent circumstances of every phenomenon, as well as in their mode of proceeding, the constant and fruitful inspiration of this notion.

The rank, which is held in the sciences of observation, by certain primitive truths, as conceived by reason, is a fact, that deserves more attention than it has yet received. It is not true, as is commonly supposed, that axioms are the exclusive property of the sciences of reasoning. They belong also to the sciences of facts, and without them, observation cannot advance a step in the comprehension of nature. The notion of the constituent circumstances of every phenomenon, bears all the characteristics, and in the natural sciences, exerts all the influence of a genuine axiom. This notion is nothing else than the necessary law of every phenomenon, the expression of that which inevitably takes place, whenever a change is produced in nature. Whence do we obtain the knowledge of this law? How do we know that it is universal? Why do we believe that all phenomena, past, present, and future, in whatever corner of space they have been or can be produced, must be subject to this law? We have already said that this conviction is not the product of experience. Experience does not reach to all possible cases, and in the phenomena which it lays hold of, it

would see only one fact succeeded by another, did not the notion of the law of every phenomenon aid it in discovering the relations which exist between these facts. The law of every phenomenon is a pure conception of reason, like all legitimate axioms. As soon as we perceive any change whatever, we know at once that it is an effect, that it has a cause, that this cause has acted to produce it, that it has been determined to produce it by some deciding influence, and, finally, that this effect becomes itself a cause, and produces, in its turn, some new result. All this is the product of reflection alone, before observation has ascertained the cause, the operation, the sufficient reason and the result. All this appears to us to be true, not because we see that it is, but because we know that it must be; and precisely on account of this necessity, our reason confidently applies it to all possible cases, and regards it, as the universal law of every phenomenon.

Without this primitive revelation, nature would be to us merely an incomprehensible enigma, and the facts of observation but sterile notions. We should perceive facts, we should be able to verify them; but as we should be ignorant that they have causes and results, we should seek neither the facts, on which they depend, how they proceed from them, nor what consequences they involve. Every fact, therefore, would remain isolated in our view, and hence, our knowledge of these facts would be absolutely insignificant; for it is not the fact itself, which it is important to know, but its law, that is to say, its origin and its consequences. Of what use to us, could be the knowledge, that food undergoes certain changes in the stomach, if we knew

neither why, nor how, nor to what end? Would this information give us the slightest understanding of the phenomenon of digestion, or afford the least aid to the science of medicine in remedying the disorders of this function? And how could we discover the causes, the mode and the end of the production of this phenomenon, if we were not instructed by our reason, that every phenomenon is produced in a specific manner, by specific causes, for a specific end, and were accordingly led to turn our attention to the observation of these circumstances?

Nature is a drama of which reason only teaches the plot. To the eye of sense, the world of phenomena is merely an ever-varying collection of isolated facts, a spectacle which has no significance. Its mystery is unfolded to us by reason alone, which reveals, in every phenomenon, the consequence and the principle of another, and in the aggregate of all phenomena, an immense chain of causes and effects, of which universal order is the admirable result. And such is the simplicity of this revelation, that it is entirely comprised in the conception of the absolute law of every phenomenon,—a conception apparently trivial, but, in fact, most fruitful and sublime.

This conception is the fundamental axiom in all the sciences of facts, the torch which guides their researches and the soul which animates their method; the procedure of the physiologists in the study of the phenomena of life is derived from it, as a natural consequence. As the idea of a phenomenon, in our minds, is only the conception of the circumstances of which it is made up, so long as any function of life is not

manifested by some of these circumstances, we are of course, completely ignorant of it; but as soon as one of them is presented, by virtue of our rational notions, the existence of the whole function is demonstrated to us; and by virtue of the same notions we conceive of the circumstances which escape our observation. It only remains to determine them. It is to discover these, that the physiologist institutes his experiments,—an operation which would be impracticable or useless, if he did not previously possess the idea of that which he seeks, if the signs were not already in his mind, by which it could be recognised. Every physiological problem is necessarily resolved into this formula; one or more constituent circumstances of a function being given, to determine the others. It is chance which presents the basis of the problem, and observation which solves it; but it is reason which conceives and proposes it; without this, there would be no investigation and no solution, for there would be nothing to investigate or to solve.

What has been said concerning the study of each function, is true of the study of life itself. In fact, life is nothing but a grand phenomenon. We cannot make it the subject of study, unless some natural manifestation has revealed to us its existence. This natural manifestation of life has been made the point of departure for science, and still forms its primary divisions.

It has always been perceived that man is preserved in life, that he produces his kind, and that he is in relation with external things. These three phenomena, universally exhibited, have suggested the inquiry, how

they are produced; and thus commenced the study of the functions of *nutrition*, of *reproduction*, and of *relation*.

It was soon discovered that each of these great phenomena was only the result of several particular phenomena, and proceeded not from a simple operation performed in a single organ, but from a series of particular operations, performed in a multitude of different organs, concealed in various parts of the body. The primary divisions were then subdivided, and the functions observed in detail, in proportion as their existence was made known by one of their constituent circumstances.

This process constitutes the science of physiology. It submits the particular functions to investigation, in order to comprehend those which are general. It will be completed, when having determined the particular functions and discovered their harmony, it shall attain to the comprehension of the general functions; and, when having gained a clear conception of these, it shall present a solution of the enigma of life itself. Such is the method of the physiologists. If we have succeeded in explaining the fundamental notion on which it rests, it will be easy to show how the physiologists have met with certain facts of consciousness in their path, which they have been forced to recognise and adopt.

Among the phenomena of life, there are some which are altogether independent of the intelligent, voluntary and sensible principle. Such, almost without exception, are all the phenomena which compose the functions of *nutrition* and *reproduction*. It is not the

intelligent, voluntary and sensible principle which determines them, which produces them, or in which they are accomplished. All the constituent circumstances of these phenomena are exterior to it; and as we have no consciousness of any thing, except what passes within us, we have no consciousness of any of these circumstances. They are all material facts made known to us by sensible observation.

But the case is different with regard to the phenomena which compose the functions of *relation.* The intelligent, voluntary, and sensible principle is always involved in the accomplishment of these phenomena. It is always either their point of departure or their subject. It is this which feels, in the phenomenon of sensation; perceives, in that of perception; and wills, in that of voluntary action. It is within it, therefore, that the determining circumstance of this last phenomenon is produced, and that the two others are accomplished. In other words, will, sensation and thought, integrant elements of every phenomenon of *relation,* are facts of consciousness, which never fall under sensible observation.

Besides, the existence of the phenomena of relation is revealed to us, in the first place, by these three circumstances. Previously to physiological researches, what do we know, in fact, of the functions of relation? We know that we have a perception of external things, that they give us certain sensations, and that we have the power of voluntary action. Such is the primitive idea, the natural idea, which we have of the functions of relation. Sensation, will, perception, are therefore the primitive circumstances known of these functions;

and it is from these that we start, in order, first to conceive, and then to discover the other circumstances, purely physiological, of the phenomena of relation. We ask ourselves, how do we perceive external things, how does motion follow our volition? And it is by virtue of these questions, that physiology has determined by experiment, the intervention of the nerves and the brain in the production of sensation and thought, and that of the brain, the nerves and the muscles in the execution of the voluntary motions. If we had not been apprised by our consciousness that we feel, that we perceive, that we will, we should never have sought and consequently should never have discovered the material circumstances of the phenomena of relation. It is not only true, therefore, that will, sensation and thought, which are facts of consciousness, enter as constituent circumstances into every phenomenon of relation; but also, that by them we are made acquainted with these phenomena, and start from them when we engage in their study.

We accordingly find the facts of consciousness so deeply involved in the functions of relation, that it is impossible, not only to conceive of these functions, in a complete manner, but even to form the least idea of them, if these facts are not taken into consideration. It is easy, at the present day, to comprehend the necessity by which the physiologists have been forced to admit them into the science of the phenomena of life, although they cannot be detected by the scalpel or microscope. In reducing the phenomena of relation to their physiological elements, they would not only mutilate the notion of these phenomena, but plunge

themselves into the grossest contradiction; for how could they deny sensation, when they were investigating the manner in which it was produced? How could they deny the perception of external things, when they were examining the mode, by which we obtained it? How could they deny the existence of the will, when they were inquiring, by what instruments in our organization, the motions, which we characterize as voluntary, are executed? Clearly, one of two things was necessary; either to renounce the study of the functions of relation, or to recognise volition, sensation, perception, as authentic and incontestable facts. If the physiologists had denied these three facts of consciousness, they would have denied the point of departure for their researches; they would have denied the functions of relation themselves; for if we do not feel, if we do not perceive, if we do not will, there is no longer any relation between us and external things; there remain only impressions which do not reach us, and motions which do not proceed from us.

The physiologists, it is true, have not hesitated a moment in view of these contradictions; they have even passed them by without notice. Precisely as they follow their method without comprehending its principle, they have admitted the facts of consciousness, by simple good sense, without giving any account to themselves of the necessity on which they are founded. Still, they cannot introduce into their results, these elements which differ so much from sensible facts, without perceiving the discrepancy. The facts of consciousness once being accepted, it must needs be recognised that they are of a different nature and are

perceived in a different manner from sensible facts; for they are invisible and intangible. Once accepted as real and certain, it must needs be confessed that there are facts, which we can neither see nor touch, and which, notwithstanding, we can feel and observe and verify with certainty. It must needs be admitted, in a word, that there are two orders of facts equally real, two modes of observation equally possible, two authorities in matters of fact equally incontestable, and two sciences of observation, distinguished by their objects, their instruments and their processes, but each equally authentic. All these admissions are the necessary consequence of admitting the facts of consciousness in the science of physiology. And this is expressly recognised in the greater part of the modern treatises on the subject. With merely a difference in form, it is clear, that enlightened physiologists, at the present day, profess the same principles, with regard to the reality of internal facts, and the necessity of submitting them, like sensible facts, to the processes of the experimental method, which we have endeavored to establish in the course of this Preface.

We may be encouraged by this example to hope, that the exclusive maxim of the naturalists respecting the principle of certainty, is losing its authority, and that they will not hesitate to abandon an opinion, which they have adopted without examination, and which they retain merely by habit,—which the physiologists were the first to desert, merely because the nature of their researches led them to perceive the weakness of its foundation, at a little earlier period.

The naturalists firmly believe, with every body else,

that man thinks, that he wills, that he feels ; they do not refuse to allow a place to these facts, among the most certain which they have discovered, and to endorse them with their own hand. But in what way do we ascertain these facts, and obtain the assurance of their reality ? This is a question which does not enter the minds of the naturalists, so long as their researches are directed only to the motions of the stars, the structure of the earth, the mineral and vegetable kingdoms, the comparative anatomy of animals, the phenomena of chemistry and physics ; and yet, as they make all their discoveries with the senses, they imperceptibly slide into the opinion, that it is only sensible facts which are susceptible of scientific certainty, and that sensible observation is the only legitimate source of knowledge. This opinion at length becomes rooted in their minds, and is formed into a precise and rigorous system. At a subsequent period, when some of them begin to make man an object of study, they at first proceed as they have done before ; with a knife in one hand, and a magnifying-glass in the other, they begin to dissect, they enumerate the different parts, they observe the motions and all other phenomena which fall under their senses. This succeeds to a charm, so long as the observer does not pass the limits of anatomy, and the phenomena of nutrition and reproduction ; but beyond those limits, the affair grows complicated. It is not easy to abstract the will in the voluntary motions ; nor sensibility and intelligence, in the phenomena of sight and hearing. Thought, sensation, volition, must therefore intervene. The naturalist is then struck with the fundamental difference between these facts

and sensible facts. He cannot but remark that the one class is not brought to his notice in the same manner with the other. With his habits and his principles as a naturalist, he is amazed at his own confidence, in admitting facts, which he has neither seen nor touched. He begins, perhaps, to hesitate, he is tempted to reject them as illusions, or as impressions which are foreign to science and worthy of suspicion. But he is soon obliged to perceive that a skepticism like this would be folly, and his good sense getting the better of the narrow and classical ideas of his scientific education, he ends with acknowledging the reality of these facts, and of all the consequences to which they give birth.

But, it is evident upon reflection, that all these admissions are, in truth, involved in the spontaneous belief of the naturalists, that man feels and wills and thinks; for if these facts are certain, it follows, as they are not derived from sensible observation, that there are facts of another nature, which can be discovered and verified with certainty. But this consequence remains out of view in the conviction of the naturalists. They do not suspect it. And it is because they do not perceive it, that they hold to their exclusive opinion with regard to the principle of certainty. This opinion, then, we may say, is merely a temporary prejudice, which cannot fail to pass away, with so many others, before the light of common sense.

IV. ON THE PRINCIPLE OF THE PHENOMENA OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

It would now remain to examine the question, whether, as there are facts within us of a different nature from sensible facts, there be not also within us a reality of a different nature from sensible reality, a *soul,* as it is called, distinct from the body, and to which we must refer all the facts of consciousness as their principle or their actual subject? In other words, are we to believe in a special being, of which sensibility, volition, intelligence, are the specific attributes, and which is as distinct from material realities as these phenomena are distinct from material phenomena? Or is it more correct to believe that these phenomena emanate from some organ of the body, the function of which is to produce them, as the function of the stomach is to digest, and that of the liver to secrete bile?

This question, in itself, is undoubtedly very important; but whatever solution we may give to it, the truth of what we have attempted to prove in this Discourse will not be affected. In fact, whether we admit a *soul,* or whether we refer to the brain, or to any other organ, the phenomena which its partisans ascribe to it, it is equally indispensable, if we wish to gain a complete knowledge of human nature, to reduce the phenomena of consciousness to a science. For, to whatever principle these phenomena be referred, they always compose a part and a very important part of the phenomena of human nature; as they are not perceptible to sensible observation, they must always be investigated by internal observation; the science of these

facts, in a word, must always be started, at the same time with physiology, must borrow its aid and lend it its own, so that, by their united efforts, the science of man may at length be rescued from the darkness, in which it has been plunged, and in which it will continue to languish, so long as man is studied only in one aspect, so long as he is not examined without mutilation.

It is equally evident, that the side which we may take on this question, is of no more importance in the study of the internal phenomena, than in that of the physiological phenomena. For to whatever principle the facts of consciousness be referred, they do not cease to be precisely what they are; the nature of their laws remains what it is. The science of these facts and of the laws which govern them is, therefore, perfectly independent of the solution of the problem in question. We may proceed with the same security to the observation of the one class and the investigation of the other, whether we give a solution to this problem or leave it undecided.

It would be wrong, then, to attack the certainty of the science of the facts of consciousness, by alleging the uncertainty of the question with regard to their principle; and from the circumstance that the physiologists and the metaphysicians were not agreed as to the nature of the intelligent, voluntary and sensible subject, it would by no means follow, that they could not coincide with regard to the nature of the phenomena of intelligence, sensibility and volition. For the sake of illustrating this truth, and at the same time, of restoring a celebrated discussion to its true place, and its

legitimate terms, we will add one or two rapid suggestions on the problem of the *nature of the soul.*

When we closely examine the two leading opinions, between which the mind has been divided on this question, we perceive that, in reality, they are not so different, as we had at first supposed; and that there is a far greater degree of misunderstanding than of actual contradiction, between the metaphysicians and the physiologists.

For, what is the opinion of the metaphysicians? They think, that there is something in man, which has the capacity of feeling pleasure and pain, and the faculty of volition, knowledge and thought.

What is the opinion of the physiologists? As they deny none of these facts, neither can they deny that we have the capacity of experiencing the former, and the faculty of producing the latter. Only they ascribe this capacity and this faculty to the brain. And why? Because their experiments have demonstrated, that the nerves, which are the conductors of sensation and the instruments of perception and volition, terminate in the brain or proceed from it; and moreover, that when the brain is submitted to certain changes, the different properties or faculties in question, are also changed and even suspended.

The metaphysicians cannot deny these facts and are forced to acknowledge, with the physiologists, that in man as he is, the production of the phenomena of consciousness depends upon the brain.

Now what is this difference reduced to? Precisely to this. The physiologists say that it is the brain which is the subject or the principle of these phenomena,

while the metaphysicians maintain that this subject or this principle is distinct from the brain, although the brain is, in fact, the indispensable condition of the modifications which it experiences, and the necessary instrument of the acts which it produces.

The opinion of the metaphysicians is founded on the testimony given by consciousness, that it is the same thing within us, which wills, which feels and which thinks; for we have the consciousness that we will, that we think, that we feel. That which has consciousness is therefore identical both with that which wills, with that which feels, and with that which thinks; hence it follows that the principle which wills, that which thinks, and that which feels are only one and the same principle, which has the consciousness of all that it performs and all that it experiences.

The consciousness not only testifies that it is the same principle which wills, which feels, and which thinks, but it also testifies, and the whole conduct of man proves it, that there are not within us twenty principles which will, which feel and which think. It recognises but a single one.

The subject of the facts of consciousness is therefore not only simple; it is, moreover, one.

If it be simple and one, it cannot be the cerebral matter, for that is made up of an infinite number of parts. If these parts were each endowed with intelligence, sensibility and will, there would be as many intelligent, sensible and voluntary principles as there are parts; but this is in opposition not only to the consciousness, but to the whole conduct of man. If it be only one of these parts which is thus endowed, this

part is not identical with the rest; it is, in reality, an existence of a different nature residing in the cerebral matter, but which is not the cerebral matter itself.

Hence the metaphysicians conclude that the principle of the facts of consciousness can, indeed, be in the brain, but cannot be the brain itself.

But the physiologists have too much good sense to believe that the white or gray matter of the brain is composed of thinking, willing and feeling particles. They regard the different parts of the brain as composing, by their arrangement, a single organ which possesses different properties of its own, and which do not belong to the parts which compose it; just as the parts which compose the stomach, form by their arrangement, an organ which has the property of digesting, which is not possessed by the separate parts in themselves.

While they refer the facts of consciousness to the brain, they accordingly recognise, with the metaphysicians, a single principle which feels, which thinks and which wills. The metaphysicians and the physiologists are then perfectly agreed on every point but one; namely, the latter maintain that this principle, with regard to the unity and the properties of which, they are in entire accordance, is an organ, the brain; while the metaphysicians contend that this principle is not the brain, but distinct from it, although it probably has its seat in the brain, and this organ is certainly its instrument.

We do not deny that these two opinions lead to different consequences; for when the organ is dissolved, as we know it is dissolved by death, the principle is

destroyed; while if it be distinct from the organ, its destruction is impossible. We will not examine, even for a moment, which of these opinions is the most intelligible.

But we would point out the fact that the metaphysicians and the physiologists are perfectly agreed as to every thing which belongs to observation. The former do not deny any of the sensible facts demonstrated by the latter, and these do not reject any of the facts of consciousness brought forward by the former. Starting from these common facts, they are agreed, moreover, as to every certain conclusion which can be obtained relative to the principle of the phenomena of consciousness. They admit, on both sides, that it must be capable of feeling, of willing, of thinking; that it must be simple, that it is one; they are compelled by facts to clothe it with all these attributes; nobody calls them in question.

Now where does the difference between them commence? Beyond the limit of the facts in the case; beyond rigorous inductions from these facts, at the point at which hypotheses begin to spring up. For the physiologists never have seen and never can see, whether it be the brain itself which feels, wills, and thinks; and in the second place, the results of their observation with regard to the connexion between this organ and the phenomena of consciousness, can be as well explained on the supposition that the brain, like the nerves, is only the medium between the voluntary, intelligent and sensible principle and external objects, as on the supposition that it is itself, that principle. Hence it follows that this latter assertion is purely hypothetical.

It is possible, on the other hand, that a more extensive and profound knowledge of the facts of consciousness may bring to light conclusive reasons in favor of the opinion which refers them to a principle distinct from the cerebral organ, or that the hypothesis of the physiologists, upon a closer examination, may be shown to be absurd. We have already very plausible grounds for believing this; but, hitherto, we are obliged to confess that nothing absolutely decisive has been brought forward; for, otherwise, the physiologists would have submitted to the evidence, as they have to that of the other facts of consciousness, which they admit; and there would be no longer a question with regard to it. The opinion which ascribes the facts of consciousness to a principle distinct from every corporeal organ may thus far, accordingly, be considered as an hypothesis.

The metaphysicians and the physiologists are then agreed, as far as any agreement could be demanded in the present state of science. They acknowledge every thing that can lay claim to certainty; with regard to the rest, it is very natural that they should be divided. The latter, accustomed to regard the identity of the organs and of causes, as a demonstrated truth, and to refer every phenomenon to the part of the body affected in its production, were not likely to make an exception in favor of the phenomena of consciousness, notwithstanding their peculiar character; and the former, who discovered neither organ nor material condition in the spectacle of consciousness, would, of course, attribute the immaterial facts which they observed to a principle of the same nature.

The difference of opinion, therefore, between the

metaphysicians and the physiologists is perfectly natural. We could wish, merely for the benefit of science, that they should not be the dupes of their own opinions, that they should not regard pure suppositions as incontestable truths. For this reason, we cannot but regret that the following expressions should have fallen from the pen of M. Magendie. "The physiologist receives from religion the consoling belief of the existence of the soul; but the severity of language and of logic, which is essential in a scientific discussion, requires us to treat of human intelligence as if it were the result of a material organ."[1] But it appears to us that it is necessary, before this can be required by the logical severity belonging to science, either that the production of the intellectual phenomena by a material organ be not an hypothesis, or, at least, that it be an hypothesis more clear, more probable, more in accordance with facts than the contrary supposition. Now, without wishing here to go to the bottom of the question, we believe that the following truths are incontestable.

1. When we ascribe to any material organization whatever, the power of producing certain phenomena, we ascribe to it a faculty which we do not and cannot discover in it. We perceive, indeed, by experience that there is a connexion between the material organization and the production of the phenomena; but as this connexion would equally exist, if the organization, instead of being the principle of the production, were only the instrument, it is impossible to assign a reason for preferring the first supposition to the second.

[1] *Précis élémentaire de physiologie.* Tom. I. p. 175. 2e édit.

The opinion, therefore, which identifies the cause of a phenomenon with its organ is merely an arbitrary explanation which we may receive or reject at pleasure; so far from being proved with regard to the brain, it cannot be proved of any organ of the human body.

2. Observation discovers in the brain, as in every other organ, nothing but a mass of material particles, arranged in a certain manner. But how this mass of material particles is capable of producing any thing whatever, the physiologists have not the slightest conception. They have an idea of the material organization, but none at all of its productive energy. The word *organ*, used to denote the cause of certain phenomena, leaves in the mind no more clear an idea of this cause, than the word *soul*. They are two words used to denote an unknown cause, which is explained neither by one nor the other. Whether we say that the material organization has the power of producing certain phenomena, or that this power belongs to a principle distinct from the organization, in point of clearness, we gain nothing in either case.

3. The manner in which we make use of different instruments, for the production of certain effects, or in which we apply certain natural forces, as water, wind or steam, to certain machines, helps us to conceive of the hypothesis of a force served by organs. But we can, by no means conceive how material parts, which in themselves, have neither the property of digesting, nor of thinking, can constitute merely by their union and peculiar arrangement, digestive and thinking forces. Hypothesis for hypothesis, therefore, that of the distinction between the cause and the organ is the most intelligible.

4. As it is demonstrated that the organs of sense and the nerves are indispensable to perception and to sensation, and yet are only instruments which neither feel nor know, and on the other hand that the nerves, the muscles and the members are equally indispensable to the production of voluntary motion, and yet are only powerless instruments in themselves, it is easy for us to conceive by analogy, that the brain, indispensable as it is to perception, sensation and voluntary motion, is in itself but another instrument, another condition of the production of these phenomena. As all the reasonings which go to prove that the brain is the principle of voluntary motion, the subject of sensation and intelligence, are founded on the fact that the brain is indispensable to the production of these phenomena, and that in proportion to the changes of the organ, the phenomena are changed, they can be applied with the same rigor to the nerves, the muscles, the members of the body and the organs of sense. These reasonings, therefore, are not conclusive with regard to the brain, since they are not so, with regard to all parts of the body. If we find no difficulty in conceiving that these parts are instruments, we can find none in conceiving that the brain is an instrument also, while it is far from being easy to regard it as a cause. In this point of view, the hypothesis of a distinct principle has a striking advantage over the other, in respect of clearness.

5. There can be taken from us, one after another, by different changes in the brain, all our sensations, all our perceptions, all our voluntary motions, and even the direction of motion. The same effect is produced by certain diseases. But no disease, no

operation has yet been able to deprive us of will. This can be easily explained on the hypothesis of the metaphysicians, but not on that of the physiologists. On the one hand, sensations and perceptions come to us from without; if we suppress the instruments, we may intercept the sensations; on the other hand, in order to execute and to direct voluntary motions, we need instruments and obedient instruments, which are not disorganized; but in order to will, we need nothing; and if the voluntary principle be distinct from the brain, no operation on the brain should be able to destroy it. But if, on the contrary, the organ itself be the voluntary principle, by producing a change in the organ, we must change or suppress the voluntary faculty, and it would be surprising that no operation, no disease has yet been known to produce this result. This observation is sufficient to show, that in its application to the brain, the hypothesis of the physiologists is not even the most probable.[1]

After the preceding remarks, it appears that scientific rigor by no means required that M. Magendie should consider the phenomena of intelligence as the results of a material organ.

It required it so much the less, as before writing the passage which we have quoted, the able physiologist had just written the following. "The intelligence of man is composed of phenomena so different from every other natural manifestation, that we refer them to a special existence which is regarded as a divine emana-

[1] Many other physiological facts confirm what we have here advanced. But we cite only an instance; we do not discuss the question.

tion, and the primary attribute of which is immortality." What the author affirms in this remark of the phenomena of intelligence is equally true of the phenomena of will, of sensibility, and of all the facts of consciousness without exception, since they are all equally destitute of the attributes which characterize material phenomena, and which render them perceptible to the senses. Now, admitting this difference of nature between the facts of consciousness and sensible facts, we do not see how the severity of logic, which is essential to science, so imperatively demands that we should refer to principles of the same nature, these facts which are of such a different nature. If there be nothing in common between the phenomenon of digestion and that of thought, and we suppose it proved that the former proceeds from a material organ, does it necessarily follow that the other proceeds from a material organ also? We are not acquainted with the logic which makes any such demand. The logic, which we are familiar with, would rather perceive in the absolute difference of the phenomena, not indeed a reason for believing, but a very strong motive for presuming that they proceed from different principles; and M. Magendie himself seems to recognise this procedure of ordinary logic, when he confesses that it is the peculiar character of the phenomena of intelligence, which causes them to be referred to a specific being, distinct from the corporeal organs. Are there, then, two different kinds of logic, or, has our celebrated physiologist good reasons of his own for thinking that the induction, which is the least natural, has nevertheless the most truth? If so, we do not believe that they are announced in his work.

We ask, finally, that in what we have now said, we should be understood only as wishing to show that the question concerning the principle of the internal phenomena has not yet been determined with scientific rigor; that whatever opinion we may prefer with regard to it, it is a point on which the metaphysicians and the physiologists ought at least to be agreed. There is another, on which also they should equally unite, namely, that this question will remain undetermined, so long as our knowledge of human nature shall continue as it is; for it is only on things which are unknown, that there is room for debate.

Whence then is our light to come? Where are we to seek for it? In a more profound observation of the phenomena of human nature, and especially, in the study, which has been greatly neglected and which is yet in the back-ground, of the facts of consciousness.

We have no desire to take aught from the importance and the utility of physiology. Its researches are of the most interesting character, and without the knowledge of the facts which it establishes, the science of man can be only a false and mutilated image of the reality. But still the researches of physiology do not embrace the whole nature of man. It has its peculiar sphere, and it is evident at once, that this sphere cannot comprehend all the questions which may be asked. It appears to us, therefore, that in the problem, with which we are concerned, though we may obtain some valuable information from physiology, we are not authorized to expect so much light from it, as from the science of the internal facts.

For, in truth, what is the problem before us? To

determine the nature of the principle, or of the subject of these facts. Now, where does good sense direct us to seek for instruction with regard to this principle? Is it not in the study of the phenomena which proceed from it? If the cause be revealed to us in the effect, is it not in the nature of the effects, and in their laws, that we should seek the nature and the laws of the cause? Is it not absurd to interrogate physiology exclusively with regard to the principle of the phenomena, with which it is not concerned, and to examine, by sensible observation, the nature of a cause, whose effects are beyond its reach? M. Magendie regrets that physiology has not yet taken hold of the problems of ideology; he has no hope of this latter science, so long as the physiologists disdain to concern themselves with it. But is there not an error in this charitable view? It is, undoubtedly, to be wished that the science of the facts of consciousness should be cultivated with the same ardor and the same method, with that of the phenomena of life; but unless the physiologists abandon the scalpel and the microscope for the observation of consciousness, they will never discover the laws of the internal facts; and the moment they abandon these instruments, they will cease to be physiologists. We are indeed desirous that physiologists should at the same time be metaphysicians, and metaphysicians, physiologists; this is our most ardent wish, and the most judicious that can be formed for the benefit of the science of man. But this alliance between physiology and metaphysics will, by no means, confound their respective spheres. Human nature will always exhibit two orders of facts, which must be observed by

different modes, and the study of which will always remain distinct in the science of man. Hence, there will always be certain questions which more especially belong to the study of the facts of consciousness than to that of physiological facts; and among this number will always be the question relating to the principle of the facts of consciousness.

It is therefore evident that if a solution can be given to this question, it must be sought in the science of the facts of consciousness; but it is no less evident, that in the actual state of this science, the question is premature.

We must then, waive this problem for the present, as it naturally belongs to a later stage of psychological developement, and is important in relation to the doctrine of immortality, but not to the study of the internal facts. Science is not yet in a state to approach it. Hitherto, there is but one point demonstrated, and agreed upon by both parties, namely, that the phenomena of consciousness are of a distinct nature, and bear no resemblance to the other phenomena of human organization. As they are beyond the limits of sensible observation, and are apprehended in a different manner, they must be made the object of a special science, which will form one of the divisions of the science of man. This science of the facts of consciousness, distinguished from physiology by its instrument and its object, should bear a name which expresses and determines this difference. The term *ideology* is too narrow; for it designates only the science of a part of the internal facts. The term *psychology*, consecrated by usage, appears to us preferable, for it designates the

facts with which the science is occupied, by their most popular characteristic, namely, that of being attributed to the soul; and as the principle of these phenomena still remains undetermined, it is of little consequence, whether it be called *soul*, or something else. The word does not prejudge the question, even in public opinion, as it is commonly understood that it continues to be a question. We hold then to the appellation *psychology*, with the wish that it may soon represent a science no less thoroughly cultivated, and in a manner no less methodical and rigorous, than its sister science, *physiology*.[1]

V. DESIGN OF THIS PUBLICATION.

Although we find, in every system of philosophy, numerous observations on the phenomena of the human mind, just as we find observations on the phenomena of nature, at the basis of all possible systems, invented to explain it; the idea of submitting this class of facts to the experimental method, which Galileo applied to the facts of the physical world, can scarcely be dated beyond the eighteenth century. Descartes, who was endowed with such a rare psychological talent, did not form the conception of a science of the internal phenomena. Both his adversaries and himself continued to walk in the paths of antiquity; the object of their researches was not the knowledge of the phenomena of the human mind, but the solution of certain questions on which they were divided. It was for the support of their opposing systems with regard to these questions, that

[1] See Note B.

they invoked, in their turn and with equal advantage, the docile testimony of observation. The same may be said of Leibnitz and Malebranche. They were illustrious speculators, who regarded observation at the service of system, and exhausted their genius, in the attempt to explain, by arbitrary hypotheses, two or three inexplicable facts, which they should have been satisfied with establishing. At length appeared Locke, and still later, his disciple Condillac, who may be considered as the precursors of the genuine science of the internal facts. We undoubtedly find, even in these philosophers, a preoccupation with certain problems, and if we perceive that they examine facts, it is usually for the purpose of destroying or justifying certain opinions. They too often reason instead of observing, and plead instead of describing. In a word, they have not yet formed a precise conception of science, nor established a firm and constant habit of method. But it is no less true that observation, at last, takes the precedence over speculation in their method, and that the desire of gaining a knowledge of facts, becomes superior to the passion for explaining them. Their works indicate the transition from the dynasty of questions to the dynasty of science. They constantly exhibit the influence of the new spirit, which was then triumphant in the natural sciences, and which conducted Newton to the discovery of the system of the world. Nevertheless, before Dr. Reid, it must be said, that no one had a clear conception both of the purpose of philosophy and of its legitimate method. Like scholars who come forward into the world, before they have entirely cast off the yoke of their masters, Locke

and Condillac were imitators, in the midst of their innovations. They did not possess the strength to confine themselves to observation, and to transmit to their successors, those actual truths, which they had verified by experience. They were eager to erect a system on the basis of observation; and as their observations were incomplete and could not have been otherwise, their system like all others, presented the nature of man in disguise, while pretending to represent it. Reid appeared upon the stage, and struck with the obvious falseness of the theory of Locke, with regard to the human mind, began to investigate the cause of his errors. The method of Locke was good; for it announced, as a first principle, that we must observe the human mind in order to know it, and know it in order to comprehend it. But Locke was not faithful in the application of his method. We cannot comprehend man without a thorough knowledge of his nature, but we cannot obtain a thorough knowledge of his nature, except by a complete process of observation. Now this thorough knowledge, like that of external nature, requires a long and difficult labor. No man can pretend to hit upon it at once.. It is the result only of an extensive series of observations, carried on with care, and patiently examined and corrected. Every philosopher should consider himself merely a simple workman in this grand undertaking, called upon to contribute the fruits of his experience, but to leave to the future the right which cannot be taken from it, namely, that of establishing a true and scientific theory of human nature on the basis of a thorough knowledge of its phenomena. Locke anticipated the task of the

future and hence proposed a theory, false, defective, and of course perishable. This has been clearly pointed out by Dr. Reid. He, moreover, explained the reasons of this, by referring to the principles which we have just announced. From that time, the Scottish school has continued faithful to these principles. It at first declared the necessity of the experimental method, in all its rigor, and followed it with rare conscientiousness. It devoted itself, with a spirit of admirable perseverance, to the task, by no means brilliant, but of the highest utility, of collecting observations on the phenomena of human nature, content with drawing rigorous inductions on the questions at issue, without aspiring to give them a complete and final solution. In this new career, the Scottish philosophy has been uniformly distinguished, by a singular good sense, a transparent clearness of expression, an uncommon sagacity and skilfulness in observation, and a candor and impartiality towards all philosophical opinions, alike honorable to individuals and to the method of the system; since they only can be tolerant who walk in the broadest paths of science.[1]

France, which had been long alienated from philosophical science, by the distractions of the Revolution, was found, at the commencement of the present century, on the same point on which England was found by Dr. Reid. What Locke had done for English philosophy, Condillac had done for French. After repose had succeeded to the storm, some of his disciples, who inherited his method and his clearness, revived his

[1] See Note C.

forgotten doctrines, and restored the broken thread of the national philosophy. They found minds, submissive to their instructions, and under their honorable auspices, France again entered the career of inquiry. The method of observation, adopted by the master, was proclaimed anew; but at the same time, his systematic doctrines were embraced. It was inevitable, that this method, applied by fresh and unprejudiced minds, should sooner or later prove the insufficiency of the doctrines. Certain consequences that were drawn from them, odious to certain individuals, must needs have hastened on this discovery, by impelling those who revolted at them, to submit the philosophy of Condillac to a severe and critical examination. We have nothing to say of these consequences. Although, in our opinion, the necessary results of the system, they were never perceived by the majority of the excellent men who defended the principles; and as to the small number who acknowledged them, they embraced them as the legitimate consequences of principles which they deemed incontestable; they avowed them not as beautiful but as rigorous; and for ourselves, we cannot but esteem and honor such scientific conscientiousness. But, be this as it may, the philosophy of Condillac, betrayed by its consequences and by its peculiar method, was loudly called in question by several distinguished individuals, and at last submitted to a public discussion by M. Royer-Collard. In the three years of his teaching, this learned professor—who is no longer any thing to France but an eminent citizen—demonstrated, against the doctrine of Condillac, the same which Reid had demonstrated against the doc-

trine of Locke; and, adopting the experimental method of the school of sensation, proved that the school had been unfaithful to the method. M. Cousin completed what M. Royer-Collard had commenced. Less occupied with the task, already accomplished, of refuting Condillac, and consequently less absorbed in the particular question treated by this philosopher, all his efforts as a teacher were devoted to the method of psychology. He described its laws, and pointed out its requisitions; and then applying it successively to the principal facts of the human mind, he proved, with an irresistible evidence, that if the different schools of philosophy had proposed false theories with regard to these facts, it was because these schools had perceived only a portion of reality, and had drawn premature inductions from an incomplete observation. In his eloquent extemporaneous discourses, which still echo in the memory of those who heard them, the necessity of applying the experimental method to the science of internal facts, of applying it with completeness and precision, of scrupulously abiding by the results of observation and the inductions which proceed from it, and of strictly guarding against the spirit of system, was demonstrated by reasoning, confirmed by the history of philosophy, and established on as strong a foundation as the nature of human truth permits.

The instruction of these two illustrious professors could not remain without fruit. And this fruit is now to be seen. In the minds of those, who were present at their lectures, there remains not a single doubt as to the new direction which must be taken by the researches of philosophy. Nevertheless, it cannot be

concealed, that whatever effect has been produced on them, it scarcely reaches to the public at large. The hearers, in communicating their convictions, modify and of course weaken the grounds, on which they were originally built; and for this reason we cannot too strongly regret that MM. Royer-Collard and Cousin have not, in this respect, followed the example of the professors of the Scottish school, who have written out and published their lectures and thus given currency to their doctrines in a popular form.[1]

We may add that it is not enough to destroy a false method and to indicate a new one. The excellence of the experimental method applied to the facts of the human mind, and especially, the possibility of this application can be completely demonstrated only by the results. The progress of a science and the discoveries which it makes are the best proof and the only adequate proof of the utility of the reform which it has experienced; and, in France, this proof is still wanting to all educated men who were not present at the lectures alluded to, or who have not been led to the same results by their own reflections. We must ascribe to this twofold cause the doubt and uncertainty which continue to hold public opinion in suspense with regard to this point. In truth, the prejudices of the naturalists are shaken with some individuals, but still maintain their ground with the greater number. The doctrine of Condillac, though attacked, retains a certain degree of popularity. The prevailing instruction is still tinctured with barbarism. A multitude of theories,

[1] See Note D.

which have no pretensions to a scientific character, which do not even indicate a suspicion in their authors that philosophy is a positive science, are coolly broached, while no critical judgment is aroused to testify that such doctrines are unworthy of the country and the age; in a word, nothing decisive among us yet announces, with clearness, a revolution of ideas in philosophy. They who anticipate it, who desire it, who long for it, unable any longer to listen to professors who have been reduced to silence, are calling for books which it is much easier to conceive of than to execute.

This want will, undoubtedly, sooner or later be satisfied, and the new school of philosophy ere long give birth to positive productions, which will confirm its doctrines and spread abroad its ideas. Meanwhile, it appears to us that no better service can be rendered to the public, than to present it with some of the labors of the Scottish school, which professes the same method and which has applied it to systematic investigations on the phenomena of the human mind. The first volume of one of the principal works of this school, *Elements of Intellectual Philosophy*, by Dugald Stewart, has been translated into French by M. Prevost of Geneva; M. Farcy, former pupil of the Normal School, is about publishing the translation of the second volume. We have reason to hope that the works of Dr. Reid, a great part of which are already translated by some friends of science, will also be given to the public. For ourselves, we have thought that we should do a valuable service, by publishing this little work, which presents in a few pages, the principal results of the

Scottish philosophy on the moral phenomena of the human mind.[1]

As to the considerations with regard to the psychological method which we have brought forward in this Preface, the few hints now given on the actual state of philosophy in France, will sufficiently explain the length to which they have been extended. If they shall impart to a few individuals a just idea of the science of the human mind, and of the process, by which it should be cultivated, our end will be attained. However unworthy they may be of the subject, we hope that the masters who have introduced us into this career, will find in them some traces of their teaching.

[1] See Note E.

II.

ON ECLECTICISM IN MORALS.

1825.

If every man must needs become a philosopher in order to distinguish good from evil, if he must decide between Zeno and Epicurus, before he can understand his duty, morality would be as foreign from the affairs of the world as the higher mathematics, and it would be more difficult to form an honest man than a great geometrician. Two or three individuals, in an age, might act with a knowledge of the subject; the others, escaping responsibility by means of their ignorance, would have nothing to do with God or with justice. The penal code would be ridiculous, the jury a nullity, and the organization of society absurd.

Fortunately for the public good and the honor of our institutions, when, on a clear moon-light night, as every body in the village is asleep, the peasant, who has never philosophized in his life, looks with a longing eye on the magnificent fruits which hang on the trees of his wealthy neighbor, it is in vain that he encourages himself by the absence of every witness, that he calculates how little harm would be done by the action, and comparing the luxurious life of the rich with the toils of the poor, the delights of the one with the hardships of the other, instinctively feels every thing which has been set forth by Rousseau, with

regard to the inequality of conditions and the excellence of the Agrarian law—all this combination of passion and sophistry meets with something incorruptible in his nature, which persists in calling the action by its right name and in deciding that it is wrong to commit it. It matters not, whether he resists or yields to the temptation; if he yields, he knows that he does wrong; if he resists, that he does right; in the former case, his conscience will assume the office of the criminal court, in the latter, it will look to heaven for the recompense, which God is expected to bestow upon virtue.

In what school of philosophy, has this poor man learned his duty? And, if he knows it, what are the researches of philosophers? Perhaps, however, as he has never read the philosophers, the sermons of the clergyman and the provisions of the law have taught him that theft is a crime. But if the clergyman were to preach, that it is a sin for him not to bring a tenth of his harvest to the parsonage, he would not believe a word of it. If he were to read in the penal code that twenty persons may talk together, without outraging justice, but not twenty-one, he would not comprehend what he read. Whence is the difference? The authorities are the same, but in the one case, they are accepted by conscience and in the other, resisted. We have all possible respect for philosophy, for the penal code, and for sermons, but we like to see each in its place. And since the peasant, without being a philosopher, distinguishes good from evil, passes judgment on the provisions of the code, approves or disapproves the precepts of his clergyman, we cannot but

believe that he possesses a standard of moral estimation, which he has obtained neither from the catechism, the code, nor philosophy; that this standard, usually called *conscience*, since it is not derived from them, precedes them; since it corrects their decisions is superior to them; and since it has the twofold advantage over them of priority and authority, is capable of explaining their origin, instead of being obliged to refer to them its own.

And if this be the case, we cannot measure the reasonableness or the degradation of the conscience of man, by its conformity to the precepts of the catechism, the articles of the code, or the maxims of philosophy; but on the contrary, we must decide that the catechism is reasonable or absurd, the code just or unjust, the philosophy good or bad, in proportion as they give a faithful or unfaithful representation of human conscience.

And hence, we perceive that all catechisms, codes and systems of philosophy must be merely the different interpretations, expressions, translations of the conscience of the human race. And as every translation, on the one hand, presupposes a text and reproduces it more or less exactly, and on the other, no translation can attain to complete precision, it follows, that all catechisms, codes and systems necessarily represent the conscience of man, but always more or less modified, more or less imperfectly and unfaithfully reproduced.

All catechisms, all codes, all systems, therefore, have a greater or less share of truth and a greater or less share of error; of truth, by the necessity of their origin; of error, by reason of human infirmity.

In their aspects of truth, they all coincide ; for truth must be always the faithful expression of one and the same reality, that is to say, of human conscience. Hence they do not divide and cannot divide except on their elements of error. The war of catechisms, of codes, and of systems must therefore be absurd ; for it is only error which causes the combat and only error which is gained by it. Good sense and the love of truth, accordingly, would combine with charity to put down intolerance.

A reasonable man, therefore, would declare himself neither for nor against any catechism, any code, any system ; for he knows that they all contain a portion of truth which he would not wish to reject, and a portion of error which he would not wish to admit. He would declare himself for truth, wherever he sees it, and against error, wherever it appears ; in other words, he would seek in every opinion the aspect of human conscience which it represents, and assemble them all before common sense, their necessary point of departure.

Placed in the common centre, from which the authors of all catechisms, of all codes, of all systems, must needs have taken their start, that is to say, in the reality of the human conscience, he would have a vivid perception of the eternal germs of all moral doctrines, in whatever form they have been manifested, germs which are only different aspects of the same reality, identical in their essence, but exhibited in the greatest outward variety. He would see how the mind of man has successively reproduced this invariable reality, in a thousand different shapes ; always making it perceived

under every diversity of outline, and always giving it some new modification; always exhibiting a part of it, but never the whole; unable to represent any thing but this, and yet never making the representation equal to the reality.

A reasonable man, therefore, would not attach himself to any school, to any sect, to any party; but yet he would not fall into indifference or into skepticism. This mode of regarding human opinions is what we call Eclecticism.

Eclecticism is not skepticism. Skepticism denies that there is any such thing as truth, or that it can be distinguished from error. Eclecticism not only admits the existence of truth, but it determines in what it consists, and hence, the means by which it can be recognised. It contends for the existence of two things, namely, reality and the idea which is the image of it. Reality is neither true nor false, the idea alone is capable of being one or the other. It is true when it is conformed to reality, false when it differs from it. Now the idea, by its very nature, can be inspired only by reality; therefore it necessarily reproduces some portion of reality; therefore it is necessarily true. But by reason of the limited and feeble nature of the intelligence which perceives reality, the idea can never be complete or exact; it can never be complete, because intelligence can never embrace the whole of reality; it can never be exact, because intelligence can never seize, with entire fidelity, the portion of reality which it embraces; and if it could do this, it would be unable to translate what it has seen into the language of ideas, nor what it has placed in the idea, into the language

of words. Every opinion, therefore, is as necessarily false as it is necessarily true. Eclecticism, therefore, as it rests on the nature of the idea, ought not absolutely to admit or to reject any opinion, but, starting from reality, which is the indispensable type of every opinion, it should seek in the opinion what is conformed to the type and admit it, and what is inaccurate and exclusive, and reject it.

Still less is Eclecticism indifference. By admitting no opinion exclusively, it does not pretend that there is no choice between opinions, but that none can claim to be perfect. It prefers a particular code, catechism and system; but, on account of its very love of truth, it is unwilling to affirm that this code, catechism, and system contain the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It does not adopt the views of the Caliph Omar and would not burn the library of Alexandria; and it does not adopt them, because such a fanaticism, so far from subserving the cause of truth, would sacrifice it, so far from doing homage to the perfect original, would bow down before its dim and unworthy image.

The characteristic principle of Eclecticism, the principle, in fact, which gives it birth, is the profound conviction that the world of opinions is only the image of the world of realities, and that accordingly opinions must be judged neither by themselves nor their consequences, neither by the antiquity of their origin nor the influence of their authors, neither by the character and numbers of their partisans, nor by any standard whatever, but their conformity to reality; so that to examine an opinion, without a previous knowledge of the reality which it undertakes to represent, is to wish

for the end without making use of the means. The substitution of this genuine criterion, instead of the multitude of false criteria, which have hitherto been adopted, is the product of modern Eclecticism. This is its true spirit, its necessary and only result. Hence, the conviction that every opinion is necessarily true and necessarily false ; hence, the selection of what is true in each ; hence, the universal tolerance which it advocates ; hence, the historical, reconciling, diffusive spirit, which goes forth from it, visits the opinions of every country and of all ages, adapts itself to every place, comprehends every language, admits every system as the result of observation for future use, gleans in every field but stops in none, because partial truth is every where, but complete truth is not to be found in any country, in any age, with any individual.

This new spirit, introduced into the natural sciences, has superseded the reign of opinions by that of observation, and has caused them to make more progress in fifty years than they had done before since the beginning of the world.

This new spirit, introduced into the province of criticism, is destined to reconcile the Romantic School with the Classical, as two different points of view of actual beauty.

Thanks to this spirit, the friends of Mozart are enabled to admire Rossini ; and the partisans of David to comprehend, how new paths may be struck out in painting without leading to barbarism.

Thanks to this spirit, the advocates of a republic understand how freedom can exist in a monarchy ; and soon perhaps, the advocates of monarchy will under-

stand how morality and happiness can be found in a republic.

Thanks to this spirit, the new philosophers perceive that there is philosophy in Christianity, and the new Christians that there is religion in philosophy.

Thanks to this spirit, modern French philosophy no longer swears by Condillac, and no longer feels the need of swearing by any one. It publishes Plato, Proclus and Descartes; it interprets Locke, Reid and Kant, brings together different countries and distant ages, every where searches out what is true and what is false, and sounding the depths of human nature, which is the philosophical reality, silently prepares a treaty of peace between all systems, which France perhaps is destined to see one day signed at Paris.

III.

ON GOOD AND EVIL.

1824.

If there were no such thing for man as good or evil, every thing would be equal to him, all conduct alike indifferent; there would be no reason for acting in one way rather than in another; indeed, there would be no reason for acting at all. His activity and his liberty would be useless faculties.

But if good and evil do exist for him, then his activity has an object, namely, good; his liberty a law, the pursuit of good; his actions assume a decided character, they tend or do not tend to the object aimed at, and thus become either good or evil.

If good and evil then exist for man, there is a rule of conduct for him, that is to say, a morality. The question, therefore, whether good and evil exist, is the same as whether a morality exists. The nature of good and evil determines the conduct to be pursued, the direction to be taken and the rule to be observed. The question, therefore, concerning the nature of good and evil is the same with the question, what is our rule of conduct or what is the criterion of morality.

To determine whether there be such a thing as good, and to ascertain its nature is, therefore, to determine whether there be such a thing as morality, and if so, in what it consists.

All philosophers who have formed a just idea of the problem of morality, have thus stated it; is there such a thing as good and what is its nature? This was the procedure of all the great moralists of antiquity.

In proportion as the reality of good has appeared to them certain or doubtful, they have recognised or denied the existence of morality; in proportion as good has appeared to them of this or that nature, they have proposed this or that morality. If skeptics have denied morality, it is because they have denied good. If Epicurus and Zeno have supported different systems of morality, it is because they have had different conceptions of good.

From these considerations, we obtain two results; first, of all questions that can be agitated, the question of good and evil is the most important, since its purpose is to decide whether we have a destiny to accomplish on earth and what this destiny is; secondly, the question of good and evil comprises two parts, namely, whether good and evil actually exist, and what is their nature.

This great inquiry embraces the whole sphere of morality; and we shall soon see that it extends still further and includes several other problems.

The judgments and the conduct of man clearly indicate that good and evil actually exist; it is by no means the case that he regards all things as equal; there are some, which he loves, which he esteems, which are agreeable to him; there are others, which he hates, which he despises, which are disagreeable to him. He makes the same distinction between actions; previously to acting, he deliberates, chooses and de-

cides; after having acted, he judges whether he has done well or ill. His whole life, if we may so speak, is nothing but a long demonstration of this truth.

Even skepticism has never denied so obvious a fact; but it has pretended that the judgments which we pass on good and evil, varying according to individuals, circumstances, times and places, it is impossible to determine what is good and evil for man; and, moreover, that even supposing we could determine the idea of good and evil, we could draw no conclusion concerning the reality of good and evil, since our ideas are the result of our constitution, and a different organization would have given us different ideas.

This last objection, which casts a doubt even on the veracity of human intelligence, does not apply to the idea of good and evil any more than to every other; and our opinion concerning its value may be seen in a former Essay.[1] As to the first objection, since we are among those who think the best proof of motion is to walk, we will reply to it, by attempting to determine the idea which we form of good and evil. We will therefore confine ourselves entirely to the question concerning the nature of good and evil.

On what grounds does man regard one action as preferable to another, or one thing as preferable to another? Neither actions nor things bear written on their face, this is good, this is bad; whether man pronounces them to be so by a judgment or a feeling is of no consequence; there is some reason, which causes them to appear so to his intelligence,

[1] See Essay on Skepticism, Vol. I.

or makes them felt to be so by his sensibility. This reason is the whole point in discussion. Whether simple or complex, relative or absolute, if we had discovered this, we should possess the criterion of good and evil, we should be able to explain all our judgments, all our preferences, all our distinctions with regard to good and bad actions or things; this reason would be the definition of good and evil, the principle and the end of our conduct, the rule of our moral judgments, in short, the whole compass of morality.

Now, in order to discover this reason, let us make two or three suppositions. Let us suppose a being capable of suffering hunger and thirst; could it be indifferent to him whether or not he drank, whether or not he eat? And could articles adapted to satisfy these two appetites have the same character in his view, with those which were not thus adapted? Let this being be capable of knowing as well as of feeling, by what standard would he judge, and wherefore would he feel, that bread and water are good? He would feel this, because being made to eat and drink, it is a good for him to eat and drink, and it being a good for him to eat and drink, bread and water are also a good for him; and the ground, which determines his judgment, is the perception of this fact.

Let us now suppose a being without these two appetites; if he has ears, he can be pleased with the murmur of water, if he has eyes, the color of bread may be agreeable to his sight; but as articles adapted to satisfy hunger and thirst, he will view them both with indifference. And why? Because as he is not made to eat or drink, it is neither good nor bad for

him to drink or not to drink, to eat or not to eat, and hence these articles, cannot be deemed by him, in this relation either good or bad.

But suppose that this being, notwithstanding his indifference for the act of eating and drinking, and consequently, for bread or water, takes notice that other beings are endowed with these two appetites, and perceives that bread and water are adapted to satisfy them, he will judge that the acts which tend to satisfy these two appetites, are a good for such beings, and that the articles which are fitted to satisfy them are also a good. And why? Because he perceives that these two acts, and these two articles are conformed to the established nature of such beings.

In the three suppositions which we have now made, on what ground is it decided that such acts or such things are good or bad? Precisely on this. A being is made in a certain manner. By virtue of his constitution, he is appointed to a certain destiny; those acts and things which have no relation to this destiny are regarded by him as neither good nor bad; those which are contrary to it he regards as bad; those which favor the accomplishment of it he regards as good; but this by no means prevents, that those acts, which are good, bad or indifferent for him, should be exactly the opposite for a being of a different nature.

According to this view, therefore, neither acts nor things are in themselves, good, bad or indifferent. And how, in truth, can we comprehend a supposition like this? A thing in itself is white, round or square, an action is prompt and energetic, or dilatory and feeble; but it cannot be good or bad in itself; so far

from it, the same action, the same thing, is by turns found to be good, bad, or indifferent, according to the nature of the being, to which it relates. What signifies to the bee either justice or injustice, either peace or war? If the queen is alive, if flowers are abundant and the sky serene, it is satisfied.

The character of actions and things, therefore, in a moral point of view, is derived from another source. And what is this source? We answer, their influence on the destiny of specific beings.

The idea of good, then, as it is unfolded in the above examples, is this. The good of a being is the accomplishment of its destiny. The evil, the non-accomplishment of its destiny. As it is constituted in a specific manner, it is destined to perform a specific part. The fulfilment of this part is its true good, since it is demanded by its nature, and enforced by its essential mode of existence. If it possesses sensibility, it feels this; if it possesses intelligence, it understands it; if it has neither, it is still true of it, though it neither feels nor understands it.

The accomplishment of its destiny,—this is all which constitutes the absolute good of any being; the actions which it performs and those which are performed by others, all objects, of whatever nature they may be, are good or bad for it, precisely according to their agreement or disagreement with that which is absolutely and truly its good.

It is impossible, therefore, to determine *a priori* concerning things or actions, whether they are good or bad; we must previously determine the being, in relation to which we inquire into their character. But

after this is done, it is still impossible in all cases to determine their character in relation to this being; for the same thing and the same action can, by turns, be good or bad in relation to it, according to circumstances. Thus, it is sometimes bad for us to eat and drink. All that we can say of the good of any being, is that it is the accomplishment of its destiny; all that we can say of good in itself, is that it is the accomplishment of the destinies of all beings.

Now what are we to understand by the accomplishment of all particular destinies? We answer, universal order.

In this vast universe, in the bosom of which we are lost, every thing exists like ourselves, but under different conditions; that is to say, if existence be the essence of all things, the unity of this immense variety of beings, this existence in each being assumes a different form. One being is distinguished from another not by existence, but by the manner of existence. Now the perception of this suggests the idea to our reason, that as each being has its own manner of existence, each has its special destiny. If we attempt to call this conviction in question, we cannot succeed; it resists all our efforts, it always comes back, it is a necessary belief. Experience confirms it; each being has its path and a rank peculiar to itself; it pursues and accomplishes them before our eyes; and if we seek to discover the ground of these different destinies, we find it in the diversity of organizations or modes of being. These two facts, moreover, are not regarded by us merely as events which are connected like the lightning and the report of thunder; but we see in one

the necessary cause of the other, that is, we find in the constitution of each being the ground and the explanation of whatever it becomes, of whatever it does, of the destiny which it accomplishes in this world; so that *a priori* and *a posteriori*, we believe and we see that each thing has its destiny, and that the specific destiny of each thing is the consequence of its specific manner of existence.

Hence, whenever we see any thing follow its nature without opposition, our intelligence perceives in this fact, an application of the great principle, which it has established; it says that this fact is according to order, because order, in its view, is its principle; but when, on the contrary, it sees a destiny thwarted, interrupted, it says that this is in violation of order, for the same reason. Hence, the ideas of order and disorder, hence, also, with a shade of difference, which this is not the place to explain, the ideas of the Beautiful and the Ugly.

It follows, then, that order and good are one and the same thing; namely, in each being, the accomplishment of its destiny, in the Universe, the accomplishment of all destinies.

If we now consider that all the beings, whose aggregate composes the world, are finite, we must conceive of them as created, that is to say, as implying a previous and higher existence, an original unity, which is the primary ground of every variety of manifestation, an Infinite, which is the necessary condition of every thing finite; and this idea of a primary and superior being, infinite and one, is the idea of God. Consequently the entire Universe, that is to say, all the beings

which compose it, is the work of God; they hold their constitution from him and therefore their destiny; the accomplishment of all destinies, that is, order or good, is the accomplishment of the decrees and purposes of God; order and good are the Providence, the Law, the Will of God.

Good, in itself, may be regarded in a moral, an intellectual, and a religious point of view. In its moral aspect, we call it, the Right; in its intellectual, Order; in its religious, Providence or the Will of God. We here set aside its relation to the Beautiful, which is another manifestation of the same thing.

Such is the spectacle which the world presents. An assemblage of beings, differently organized, all of which have a destination in accordance with their manner of being, all of which tend, by their nature, to the fulfilment of this destination; the good for each, is to remain what it is, if it be inert; and to become every thing that it is capable of, if it be active. Forces, by their nature, tend to developement; matter to remain what it is; developement is the destiny and the good of the former, inertness, the destiny and the good of the latter; the accomplishment of all these destinies results in universal good or order.

But in this world, nothing completely accomplishes its destiny, since all the various natures are placed in opposition by the arrangement of things. Matter is disturbed in its inertness by the activity of force; force is restrained in its developement by the inertness of matter; the two natures are in perpetual conflict. The world, in truth, is nothing but the struggle between these two principles; and every being reproduces the

world in itself, and exhibits the same fact, in an infinite variety of forms. Every being is composed of matter and of force, and its life is only the combat of the two natures. Forces, moreover, are universally in opposition to one another. Instead of developing themselves in parallel spheres, they come together in mutual resistance. They present an obstacle, a disturbance, a limitation to one another; and this opposition is such an essential element in this order of things, which we call the world, that if they combine and labor for the same end, their combination demands a mutual sacrifice; for, what one performs, in the common work, is a robbery upon the other.

Hence, there is no nature which completely fulfils its destiny here below; all perpetually tend towards it and cannot do otherwise; but this tendency is every where thwarted, doomed to incessant strife, and never able to gain a complete victory.

This is the primary source of evil. Evil is the imperfection of good or of order. Evil, for every being, is the imperfection of the work, to which it is destined by its nature. Evil, for matter, is the imperfection of the inertness which is the consequence of its nature; evil, for force, is the imperfection of the developement which is the consequence of its nature.

There is evil for the force which animates the plant, the animal, the man, inasmuch as its developement is limited and finite; there is evil for the material elements which it draws together, inasmuch as their inertness is disturbed; that is to say, there is discord, or the imperfect accomplishment of their peculiar destiny in the two component principles; the evil of matter

proceeds from force, the evil of force proceeds from matter and from other forces; evil, in general, proceeds from the conflict of different natures and their destinies.

Evil is, by no means, a positive existence, but the imperfection of good or of order. This world is not the conflict of good and evil, of order and disorder; but we properly say of it, that it is not perfectly good, that its order is not complete; its order is a tendency to order, a rough, unfinished sketch. This is attested by all the beings of which it is composed. Sensible natures by their sufferings, intelligent natures by their judgments, moral natures by their fortitude and resignation, other natures give their testimony to the same fact, and it is understood by those who can read on the face of things that which they do not know themselves.

Why, then, are there so many created beings with tendencies that can never reach their object; and among these beings, some who are aware of their condition and who can, accordingly, reproach the creation to which they belong and the Creator who has given them existence? Why this struggle of every being with every other being? Why these natures doomed by their constitution, some to remain inert, others to be developed, and doomed by the arrangement of things, the former, to agitation, and the latter, to impotence? The immediate cause is to be found in the opposition between the natures. But why this arrangement? Here is the mystery of this life and of this world. We may attempt its solution on some other occasion. Meanwhile, let us bear in mind, that this

life is mortal, and that this perishable world can be only a world of preparation.

We have determined the nature of good and evil in itself, independent of the diversity of beings for which good and evil exist. It follows, from our inquiries, that the idea of good can be fixed, although we cannot fix a general rule for good actions or things. It is the confounding of fact and right which has led to the belief of the constant variableness of good; right is permanent, but it is impossible to decide beforehand upon the immense diversity of facts; our reason is the tribunal which in every case judges of the fact, and marks it with its appropriate name. In this way we pass judgment upon actions and things. There is, then, an absolute good and an absolute evil, in the view of our intelligence; its judgments are not fluctuating and abandoned to chance; and that which it deems to be good is good in itself, provided that it be under no delusion and that it receive the truth from its own dictates and not from the caprices of fancy.

We may, also, infer from what has been said, that as every being has its specific constitution, it has its specific destiny and consequently its specific good and evil. Hence it follows,—to return to our starting-point and to determine what is the good of man, and from that, what is its standard,—we must examine his nature, deduce from it his destiny, and thus succeed in fixing the idea of human good as we already have that of good in itself. This is the second part of the present investigation, or the moral investigation properly so called. We must be satisfied with having indicated it, for a rapid article like this cannot contain it.

But, before leaving the general point of view, we ought to point out the great divisions, under which beings are classed in their relation to order or to good in itself.

In every possible being, nature tends to its end, otherwise it would not be what it is; to be what it is and to tend to its end, are one and the same thing. But sometimes this nature has feeling, sometimes it has not; sometimes, it comprehends, sometimes it does not; sometimes, in fine, it can control or abandon itself, direct its own actions or leave them to chance, and sometimes it is destitute of this prerogative. Sensibility, intelligence, liberty,—these are the three characteristics, the presence or the absence of which diversifies the effects of good and evil in different beings. The uncertainty which we feel with regard to their existence in beings other than man, compels us to examine their consequences in ourselves, as in our nature the three are combined.

The effect of good and of evil, in a being endowed with sensibility, is pleasure and pain. An intelligent being without sensibility would comprehend what was his good or evil, but would not feel it; he would have no idea of what we call an *agreeable or disagreeable sensation*. A sensible being, for whom there is neither good nor evil, would neither enjoy nor suffer, for his nature, destitute of all tendencies, would not be disturbed or aided in the exercise of inclinations, which it did not possess; and it is precisely this, which constitutes the phenomenon of sensation. We have an evident proof of this in our own experience. Our nature is sensible, and is endowed with tendencies; if

they are developed without opposition, it enjoys; if they meet with obstacles which limit and restrain it, it suffers. Pleasure, therefore, is the feeling of good, pain the feeling of evil; one is the effect of the other, but one is not the other, as was thought in the school of Epicurus. We may conceive of the cause without the effect in natures destitute of sensibility; our intelligence distinguishes them in our own. The good is estimated and determined by our intelligence, which comprehends our destiny and judges whether we accomplish it; it would discover it, if we did not possess sensibility; but pleasure is a matter of feeling, and without sensibility it would disappear. Order and happiness, good and pleasure, are therefore inseparable, since one is the effect of the other; it is a mistake to make them enemies, as we shall elsewhere explain.

It follows, moreover, that precisely as evil is the imperfection of good, pain is nothing but the suspension or the imperfection of happiness. If our nature were in a better condition, in which it met with no obstacle, it would certainly be happy, and probably, without knowing it. Happiness is the sense of a natural and orderly state; pain is the sense of accidental disorder; it is only a limitation of happiness as evil is a limitation of good. The fundamental pleasure of being and acting, which proceeds from the sense of existence and activity, that indestructible portion of order, never ceases to subsist even when surrounded with the utmost misery.

It is the characteristic of rational natures to comprehend the good, as it is that of sensible natures to feel it. The feeling of good is pleasure; the concep-

tion of good is an idea. Every nature, by the very fact of its existence, tends towards its end or its good, this is common to them all; but it is a peculiar privilege to feel this good, and a still greater one, to comprehend it. As soon as this is attained, good ceases to be the satisfaction of a blind craving or the desirable cause of a sensual enjoyment; and becomes the accomplishment of universal order in ourselves. And precisely, as it is necessary to our nature, because our nature is made for it, as it is agreeable to our sensibility, because it renders it happy, it is also holy and venerable to our reason, because it presents the spectacle of order; and because there is the same sympathy between reason and order, that there is between sensibility and happiness, between an active nature and its developement.

But while our sensibility is limited to the feeling of happiness, and our instinctive nature to the aspiring after its end, our intelligence transports us beyond ourselves, and, by the idea of good, which it conceives, enables us to comprehend the good of every being as clearly as we do our own, and elevates us to the conception of absolute good or order.

And as order is the same whether in others or in ourselves, as it every where maintains the same authority over reason, it is no less venerable to us in other natures than in our own, and the good of others is no less sacred to us than our own good. In fact, reason does not regard any thing as good because it is our good, but because it is the accomplishment of order; it is not we who are venerable in its eyes, but order; good, therefore, wherever it is found, is of equal value

to it. Our sensibility and our instinct are individual and selfish, our reason is impartial and impersonal; it prefers the Good to the individual, because the individual is valuable to it, only as the instrument of order, and order is all which it regards as sacred. It is from this, that we obtain all justice, all self-devotion, all morality.

But the intellectual element would bring us to this elevation in vain, if we were not also free. Under the dominion of fatality, man would comprehend the Good, he would perceive his nature advancing necessarily towards its end and blindly contributing to universal order, without the ability to take part in the work, or voluntarily serve the Divinity, which his reason adores. A mode of existence like this, in which we should comprehend the Good, while unable to perform it, involves a contradiction, which forces us to regard it as impossible; and this presumption hitherto has not been set aside by experience; all reasonable beings, that we have known any thing of, have been found at the same time, in possession of freedom.

The supposition that a free being should be unable to comprehend the Good is still more revolting. Why should we have liberty of action, if one thing were not to be done or avoided rather than another? We can imagine the idle contemplation of the Good, but it is impossible to comprehend the useless endowment of a blind liberty.

It is the characteristic of liberty to give the individual a share in the accomplishment of order; without liberty, a being tends towards its end and this end is order; but it tends towards this, by virtue of its con-

stitution, which comes from God; and it is God who acts within it, as it is the artificer who acts in the machine which he has made; but in free and intelligent natures, reason having formed the conception of order, and defined the individual as the instrument of order, the individual, who feels himself master of his own activity comprehends that he is charged with the accomplishment of order in himself; he therefore takes the direction of himself into his own hands, and advances towards his appropriate end by his own endeavors. From that moment, his actions are his own, their merit and their responsibility are his; he is a moral being; that is to say, like the Deity himself, he comprehends the Good and performs it of his own will.

Liberty does not consist in doing any thing, other than what nature, left to its own tendencies, would have done without it; but it consists in doing this in the name of order and not of the individual; in doing it voluntarily and not by necessity; with intelligence and not blindly; and this imparts to the individual the merit and the responsibility of what takes place within him.

Liberty and intelligence give birth to right and duty, ideas which have often been defined and as often disfigured. A being who comprehends the Good and who is free, is subjected to the duty of accomplishing it in himself, and of respecting it, wherever he beholds it. It is his duty to accomplish it in himself, because this is the special trust, with which he is charged; it is his duty to respect it, wherever he beholds it, because it is the Good which is venerable and not the individual

in whom it is accomplished. Besides, he feels that it is his duty, to aid in the accomplishment of good, wherever he can, because he is called upon for all that is in his power.

A being created in order to accomplish his destiny, does not possess the power of changing it. On this ground, it appears wrong to reason, to place any obstacles even before the blind and necessary developement of his nature; but if this being comprehends his destiny and is charged with its fulfilment, it is unjust to oppose its accomplishment, for it not only hinders the Good, which is wrong, but it hinders its accomplishment, in a responsible being, and this is injustice. This explains the fact, that every free and intelligent being assumes the right of accomplishing his destiny, and imposes on every other being who comprehends his situation, the duty of respecting this right, on the penalty of being unjust.

We will not pursue the deduction of these consequences to any greater length. We have said enough to show that if the good of every being is the accomplishment of its destiny, it is not accomplished by all upon the same conditions. It is easy to mark out the scale. In the first place, beings which are only blind and insensible instruments, which accomplish their end in creation without willing it, without knowing it, without feeling it; then animated or sensible beings, which feel pleasure in the satisfaction of their wants and pain in the disappointment of their appetites, and in which, consequently, the power of instinct is confirmed, directed and stimulated by sensibility; finally, free and intelligent natures, which pass judgment on

their instincts and their sensations, comprehend the Good, accomplish it voluntarily and for its own sake, realize it in themselves, and venerate it every where; and in which is exhibited the admirable phenomenon of moral good and evil.

IV.

HOW DOGMAS COME TO AN END.

1823.

When a dogma approaches the end of its reign, a profound indifference is first seen springing up for the received faith. This indifference is not doubt, men continue to believe; it is not even a disposition to doubt, for as yet it has not even been suspected that doubt was possible; but it is the characteristic of a belief which has no longer any life and which subsists only by custom. In the remote ages in which the dogma had its birth, it was adopted, because it appeared true; it was then believed for reasons that were known; faith was alive. But the children of the first converts began to admit the dogma without verifying its claims, that is to say, to believe without comprehending their belief; and from that time, the foundation of faith was changed; instead of resting on conviction, it took its stand on authority and was transformed into a habit. Thus transmitted from generation to generation in consecrated words, and always less understood in proportion to its distance from its source, the moment at length arrives when the dogma governs only in appearance, because all sense of its truth has died out from the mind. Faith is now only an indifferent routine which is observed, nobody knows why, and which subsists only because no attention is paid to it,

Then arises the spirit of examination. Astonished at their docile attachment to formulas which they do not comprehend, surrounded by a people which shares their ignorance and their credulity, certain individuals ask if they ought to believe without a reason, and finding, within the depths of their consciousness, an invincible repugnance to a blind faith, they begin to look more closely at the truth of the dogma, which reigns without taking the trouble to justify its rights.

This is not an act of hostility, but of good sense. Those, in whom the spirit of inquiry is awakened, yield to it as to a reasonable want. It is, by no means, their intention to destroy the dogma, or to change the ideas of the people; they wish only to find in the consecrated doctrine some element of truth which shall legitimate their previous faith, respond to their present good will, and establish their attachment to its maxims, for the future, on an enlightened conviction.

But the dogma does not give them what they seek; for in passing through so many ages, it has been corrupted. Established by means of the truth which it possessed, this truth remained pure, during the continuance of its struggle for power; but afterwards, the fervor which it excited passed away and triumph produced apathy; the indolence of man enveloped it in formulas with which the memory was burdened, and which dispensed with an intelligent comprehension; the neglect of its sense permitted the corruption of its forms; ignorance and interest, after taking possession of them, became their interpreters; so that, at this day, the doctrine once so full of life and truth, presents to the good faith of rising skepticism, nothing but a shape-

less collection of ancient, mutilated symbols, through which there is no glimmering of the primitive sense, and of despotic or superstitious maxims which have been added by the ambition of power or the degradation of the people.

A thousand errors, a thousand palpable absurdities, the frauds of interest and abominable practices, strike the eyes of those who first examine; and as they possess a moral and reasonable nature, they cease to believe that which is false, they cease to respect that which is contemptible. From that time, a new faith arises in their mind upon the ruins of the old. This faith has nothing positive, it is only the negation of the received faith, the belief that that faith is not well-founded; but this conviction is lively, because it is unlooked for; it is lively, because it is the awakening of human intelligence after ages of slumber, and because truth, always beautiful in itself, inspires those who perceive it, for the first time, with a strong passion; it is lively, in fine, because it is felt that it contains the seeds of a revolution.

In the emotion excited by such an unexpected discovery, the first skeptics cannot keep back the cry which announces it to the world. They are strangers both to the prudence and the hypocrisy, which would bury truth in the earth; these are taught in the storms of revolutions, after the power of an idea has been made known, and the scaffold has exhibited the perils of sincerity. They do not belong to this epoch, since before experience, nature goes its own way. Without foresight, without fixed intentions, without calculation, the first discoverers declare what they have found,

they presume to assert that the reigning dogma is false, and putting words in circulation which had not been pronounced for centuries, they appeal for their support to reason and good sense; from that moment society is thrown into agitation and a terrible conflict ensues.

Aroused by the voice of these new prophets, the people who slumbered in indifference, lend their ear, and perceive that they do not believe, or at least, that they believe without knowing why; doubt gradually arises, for they cannot but yield to the calls of good sense; but this doubt, at first, assumes no definite shape, the mind receives it slowly and unconsciously. While reason draws them away from the dogma, and the love of novelty inclines them to skepticism, a still stronger influence holds them back, the power of custom and veneration for the past. Far from desiring change, they resist it, it is in spite of themselves that they are seized by skepticism; and as long as this inward struggle continues, they remain immovable, as if ideas were not sufficient to destroy their indifference to movement or to repose, and appear to wait for the doctrines to be combined with interest and passion, before they can comprehend the cause and take sides with a party.

The case is different with the men who govern in the name of the ancient faith, and who live upon it. These men, who, in the peace of a long domination, have forgotten the labors which established it and have lost sight of the possibility of a change, are aroused in their turn from the general supineness, menaced, but surprised and disarmed; for security has enervated them. They have also lost the sense of their dogmas;

they no longer know either why or how they are true. These formulas, so convenient to their indolence, so docile and so pliable to their ambition, now that reason interrogates them, as they have been mutilated by their hands, deprived of significance, reduced to vain words, betray them in the hour of danger and give no response to their appeals. To the truth, with which they are pressed, they have nothing to oppose but usage, authority, faith; or rather they do not think of making any reply and disdain all reason. Masters of the physical force which they regard as their property, proud of their ancient supremacy which they consider immovable, they feel nothing but contempt for their adversaries, and are more irritated by their audacity than alarmed by their power. They permit no discussion with them, but put them to death; they make no attempt to enlighten the people on the truth of their dogmas, but threaten all who abandon them with capital punishment. This is the first conflict. The spirit of examination on one side, authority on the other; philosophy or the appeal to reason with the one, the appeal to usage with the other; on one side, nothing but moral force, on the other, nothing but physical.

But the blood of the first martyrs begins to interest the people in the quarrel. A sense of justice compels them to perceive, that it is wrong to assassinate men for expressing what appears to them to be only truth and good sense. They learn to lament the victims and to hate their persecutors. The power of public opinion is aroused; truth has conducted to indignation; and it is not long before indignation towards the executioners awakens an interest in the doctrines of the

persecuted, seconds their truth and aids its reception. The realization of these doctrines becomes the want of a great number; force is divided, and the ancient dogma is not only shaken in public opinion, but begins to be threatened in its material existence.

This change does not escape the notice of its partisans. They begin to recover from their haughty confidence, they dare not multiply fagots and scaffolds, in the presence of this formidable power; they are compelled to utter reason and to plead their cause before the tribunal of opinion, which they at first declined. This is the epoch of the rational conflict of the two doctrines. But in this conflict, one of the adversaries has an immense advantage over the other, namely, that of having nothing to defend; the latter, a great disadvantage, the obligation of defending every part of a complicated system, into which error has been introduced and so intimately combined with the truth, that he cannot surrender the one without abandoning the other; to say nothing of the fact that the partisans of the old dogma no longer comprehend it, or cannot reconcile its primitive interpretation which was true, with the new one in question which is not true. On one side then the language of good sense is used which every body understands; on the other, they are forced to plunge into a sea of erudition, from which they can bring nothing palpable, nothing conclusive in the eyes of the people. This is soon felt, and feebleness, in its irritation, becomes excited, falls into a passion; and sophistry and insult take the place of reasoning. In this manner, they injure their credit and lose their cause. The old dogma has been already

condemned for replying to arguments by force; it is now condemned for opposing nothing to sound arguments but subtilty and passion. The people pass from indignation against it to contempt; it was before hated, it now becomes ridiculous.

Then commences the epoch of pleasantries. Good sense, in its triumph, becomes gay and sarcastic; it completes by ridicule the victory which it began by serious reasons.

But the rage of its adversaries is thus increased. All interests are called together; incredulity is pointed out to them as a dangerous enemy; if the belief which gives life to power and by which it reigns is destroyed, power itself will also fall, and with power, the men by whom it is held; authority will pass to the side of the new doctrines; it will be exercised by their partisans; in a word, the revolution of ideas will introduce a complete revolution of interests; things as they are are universally threatened by things as they would be. Hence the powerful alliance which is formed between those who gain some advantage from the ancient belief, and those who are persuaded that its overthrow would produce a general change and materially affect their interests. In this alliance, the soul of which is fear, account is no longer made of faith, or of morals; the only tie is that of interest; and yet this base motive is disguised under the honorable names of morality, of religion, of order, of legitimacy; it is embellished with all that is holy and venerable in the remembrance of the past. Hypocrisy, cunning, the combined remains of a power that has been shaken but not destroyed, the only alternative that is left to conquer or perish,

the recklessness of means which grows out of the iniquity of the motive,—all conspire to arm this new alliance with an extraordinary power, a power the more dangerous, as its adversaries, accustomed to victory, regard their enemy as prostrated, and despise him even more than they have ever feared him.

Another cause of reaction is added to this carelessness and to the real strength of the opposite camp. The work commenced with destruction; this was the primary want. Destruction was succeeded by mockery; this is the characteristic of conquerors. But hitherto there has been no attempt to construct; and yet something positive is demanded both by the people and by reason. In the ruin of a worn-out dogma, serious denial at first takes the place of faith; it is believing something, to believe that a prevalent doctrine is false; an ardor, an enthusiasm is at first given to this which entirely fills the soul. But after it is clearly demonstrated that the enemy is beaten, that there is nothing further to do but to laugh at his absurdity, zeal must needs fall away for want of opposition, the mind, as it has been deprived of one belief and now clings to none, feels a void in this perfect independence, which though flattering and delightful for a time, cannot fail at last to weary a nature whose feebleness cannot support the burden of doubt.

In every revolution of ideas, skepticism finds its place; it is sent to destroy and it survives its victim; but it cannot hold out long. Faith is a want of our souls, because we know that there is such a thing as truth. Doubt is a state which can never be agreeable, except as the negation of a false belief, from which

we feel that we are emancipated. This satisfaction once tasted, we aspire after a new belief; error being destroyed, we wish for truth.

Now, though it be easy, when the spirit of examination is awakened, to destroy what is false, it is not easy, after error is demonstrated, to discover what is true. A thousand systems spring up. The victorious party, united for destruction, divides in reorganization. The perspective of power embarrasses this philosophical question with private interests. The old friends of reform are separated; they soon begin to fear one another, and in a short time, they will detest one another more than they now detest their common enemies, whom they consider no longer formidable. The party of truth becomes the prey of faction, while the opposite party gains compactness and strength by the unity of interest, to which a common fear has given birth.

The people, meanwhile, whose material interests are not directly involved in these quarrels, continue to look on with good sense, wishing and seeking for nothing but the truth, but wishing for that speedily, because it is an essential want. They know that truth is no longer to be found in the old dogma; come what will, they can never rally with the partisans of that; but they are surprised at not hearing it from the mouth of their new friends. They who before spoke with so much good sense, with such disinterestedness and unanimity, are now seen lost in unintelligible systems, they are divided on every point, they mutually hate one another and have evidently become no less selfish and ambitious than their adversaries. Where is the pure zeal of these apostles of the new faith? Where

is the promised truth? Where is the happiness which they announced to the people? It was for the people and for the people only that they professed to labor; and it is for themselves that they now combat, that they split into parties, and forgetting the ancient enemy, attack and tear in pieces one another.

The champions of the old party take care to make good use of this. In their turn, they attack the proposed plans, with argument and ridicule; in their turn, they bring the charges of selfishness, of ambition, and of hypocrisy; they demand what is to be done with the people, to whom such promises have been given; they make them ashamed of having been duped, of having lent their influence to cheats and served them as tools. And as the people are in suffering—for seasons of revolution cannot be gone through without suffering—they remind them of their misery, they contrast this with the happiness which they once enjoyed, or at least with that of their fathers, whose distance allows full scope to the pictures of the imagination. Avoiding the question of the truth of the ancient dogma and of the new opinions, they appeal only to interest; and thus demoralize society which they can no longer retain by the authority of truth and duty. And all this, they cause to be every where proclaimed; for they are united in a firm organization, they have the established power in their hands, while their adversaries have no power but that of speech.

The people then despair of truth. They see around them none but deceivers; they become distrustful of all, and fancy that the only object in life is to be as free as possible from misery, that it is folly to lend an

ear to the sublime words of truth, of justice, of human dignity, that religion and morality are nothing but means of imposing upon them and gaining their service in projects with which they have no concern. They become skeptical with regard to every thing but their own interests; and passing to indifference for all dogmas and for all parties, esteem that to be the best which will cost them the least. There is none for which they can be made to take up arms; there is none which is worth that trouble. Their religion, their morality, their politics, their sole and universal doctrine is interest; their leaders and masters have succeeded in making them similar to themselves.

The people having now become indifferent, the partisans of the ancient dogma have every thing that they desired. They are by no means anxious to obtain a moral ascendancy over the people, to be esteemed, believed and loved by them, still less that the people should be virtuous, religious, happy. The people are indifferent, and they are the masters; this they know, but their adversaries do not know it. These retain all the confidence with which their former empire over opinion inspired them; they have not a suspicion with regard to it, and slumber in security, waiting for power to fall into their hands without an effort of their own, and attempting only to remove it from those of their friends. They laugh at the progress of their enemies, and console themselves with the thought that the people are on their side, and that without the people, no permanent advantage can be gained.

At length the moment for awaking arrives. After having slowly and secretly collected their forces and

woven their plot, after being assured above all of the neutrality of the people, the adherents to the old dogma burst forth of a sudden, and send out the vengeance which they had so long suppressed. All the recollections of their defeat, of their disgrace, of the danger they have gone through, enkindle their resentment; they are cruel as mortified imbecility, vindictive as hypocrisy; bloody executions relieve them of their enemies, and serve as the preparation for a despotism jealous and exclusive as terror itself. They hasten to form an organization. Instructed by former reverses, their first care is to crush that fatal spirit of examination which so narrowly threatened their power, and that holy morality which extends its arms in the service of truth. They accordingly suppress at once the taste for knowledge and the belief in virtue; for these, they substitute superstition, formulas, ceremonies, the right of explaining which they reserve to themselves, in order to satisfy the secret and imperishable want of moral harmony which lies in the human heart, and to fashion this want in their own manner and to direct it to their own ends.

This epoch is a frightful one. There is nothing consoling, nothing which recalls the dignity of human nature, either in the dominant party or in society. The people, disgusted with improvement and reform, appear ready to submit to the education provided for them, as a matter of interest. As their material concerns are taken care of, they seem to abandon their intelligence and their will to their wretched preceptors. The observer trembles to see them pass so soon from the indifference which endures superstition, from the

selfishness which enjoys it, to the degradation which delights in it and believes in it; he despairs of the people and of truth, which the people alone by the support of their power can reinstate in authority.

If he now turns his attention towards the power which governs this degraded community, he beholds able men, but corrupt and hypocritical, from whose school proceed fanatical pupils, without virtue, who will possess the ability of their masters, their indifference with regard to means, but not like them, conscious of doing wrong; on the contrary, who will feel that every thing is good which leads to what they deem a sacred end. In the hand of these terrible masters, a powerful affiliation, which covers the whole country with a thread that gains strength and completeness from day to day, and an administrative organization no less strong and no less carefully maintained; the right of speech prohibited to every opposing doctrine and confined to the agents of power; no hope of seeing so many chains broken, or any limit to such a fearful progression of despotism, degradation, and enormous abuse.

But this is only a salutary and final crisis, which precedes the recovery of the social body. In those hopeless moments, it seems as though the dignity of human nature made a preternatural effort not to succumb, like the vital force in the last stages of a violent disease. Take courage, you, whom Providence raises up in these wretched days. A germ of future life is fermenting in the bosom of this corruption, and that which you regard as death is only a transformation.

It is needful that the generation which prostrated

the ancient faith should pass away; their work was to destroy, and it will never be given them to construct. It is too great a task for the feebleness of man both to overthrow error and to re-establish truth. Their life has been worn out in combating the ancient dogma. Attaining their end in old age, their failing strength has been lulled in skepticism, and their minds deprived of faith, abandoned to the morality of the passions. Their enemies have gained no small advantage over them; and the people, who first welcomed them with rapture, beholding their imbecility, their divisions, their degradation, have forgotten their noble services, and the admiration which they once commanded, and have seen them perish on the scaffold, without an emotion of regret. Thus, they had not sufficient force to establish the new dogma, neither were they surrounded by a confiding generation which claimed them as its apostles. They must needs have succumbed under their adversaries,—but not till they had smitten them with a mortal blow,—and leave in their hands the community which they at first emancipated.

But these early soldiers of reform have not fought in vain; they have broken the charm, and with the young and enlightened minds, that have grown under their culture, this charm can never regain its strength. The despotic reign of the ancient dynasty has been fruitless, its hollowness and falsehood have become apparent. It is conscious itself of its own nothingness; it is incapable of feeling what it is obliged to affect; and the inability to believe its own doctrines deprives its words of all moral strength and life. It perceives this, its weakness makes it oppressive, and unable to

govern, it binds in chains. It is a power, to which men submit, though they have sense enough to despise it. A new generation springs up which was born in the bosom of skepticism, at the period when the two parties were engaged in dispute. This generation has heard and comprehended; the old dogma has no authority with it; in its view, skepticism is right in its quarrel with the dogma, but wrong in itself; after it has accomplished the work of destruction, there is nothing of it left. Already these children have got beyond their fathers and feel the poverty of their doctrines. They obtain a presentiment of a new and better faith, they fix their eye on this inspiring prospect with enthusiasm, with conviction, with resolution. The hope of a renovated age is in them, they are the elect apostles of its coming, and in their hands is placed the salvation of the world.

Superior to every thing which surrounds them, they cannot yield to the dominion of the new-born fanaticism, nor of the selfishness and unbelief which pervade society. They sit in judgment upon the past, they despise the skepticism of the present and abhor its corruption. They have faith in truth and virtue, or rather, by that guardian Providence, which is sometimes called the force of things, these two imperishable images of the Deity, without which the world could not long exist, have taken possession of their hearts, in order to gain fresh life in them and by them to restore the youth of humanity.

They, moreover, feel the importance of their mission and understand the character of their age; they comprehend that which their fathers did not compre-

hend, of which their corrupted tyrants had no conception; they know what is meant by a revolution and they know this because they have come at the right time. Their fathers perceived only the first half of their task, and this they have accomplished; convinced of the error of the ancient dogma, their hands overthrew it; but their minds, absorbed in the greatness of this work, were unable to pass beyond it and take more distant prospects into view. As to the partisans of the ancient dogma, they have not comprehended either the reason of its fall or the consequences which ensued; it was the misfortune of their position that they could see nothing in the war with the skeptics, but a quarrel for power. Upon their first defeat, they accused their own want of management; in their present victory, they boast of their skilful conduct, and make every preparation to retain for the future the advantage of strength and adroitness which they have already secured. There are none who speak more of faith, of religion, of morality; but it is by habit and calculation; they alone are destitute of belief, of religion, of morality. Even the skeptics had more than they; for these believed in the evil of error; this was their faith; and it was true and sincere and because it was true, it prevailed against error. It was not as adversaries of the ancient dogma, that they were forced to succumb, but as adversaries of every dogma; enemies of what was false, they were victorious, but incompetent to establish the truth, the need of believing separated them from the people and delivered them to the vengeance of their rivals. But now their successors appear on the stage, nurtured in hatred of the

ancient dogma, free from the care of refuting it,—a work already done,—eager for new manifestations of truth, and filled with the wants of their age, which no prejudice can prevent them from feeling. The secret, which was concealed from others, is revealed to them; they see that doubt is not a revolution, but a preparation for it. They perceive the remaining half of the task, they feel the necessity of truth, and because this is not felt by others, they know that the future depends upon them, and they are conscious of strength for the mission. They hence recognise the call,—not to continue the worn out quarrel between the ancient dogma and skepticism, not to rekindle among the people the decaying fires of personal hatred, an exhausted enthusiasm, or the passions of a former age,—but to investigate the truth, to discover the new doctrine to which every mind unconsciously aspires, in the name of which every hand will take up weapons, if need be, which will fill the void left by the removal of the ancient faith, and terminate the lawless interregnum of force. Such is the holy work to which they devote themselves in silence.

They cannot, however, remain insensible to the miseries of their epoch, nor lose all sense of the present in the contemplation of the future. The sight of what is done by their oppressors, and of what they are preparing to do,—the spectacle of a people which they have corrupted, degraded, deceived, made wretched, and moulded, with an execrable ingenuity, for a long servitude,—every thing, in the scene of desolation, that passes under their eye, strikes into these youthful souls, which glow with the love of truth and virtue, a

bitter disgust at society and a profound indignation against its corrupters and masters. Still, they do not lose their faith in it, they do not despair of it for the future, but they do not believe that this future will exist for them; they dare not even promise it to their children, so heavy is the tyranny which weighs them down, so strongly are its chains linked together, so wide appears the chasm between what they see and what they hope for.

And how is it possible to guard entirely against the illusions of the present, and, feeble as we are, when it crushes us, when it swallows up our brief life, to estimate it according to its real value and set down the result? How is it possible, when the events of every day appear more and more at war with the predictions of reason, to resist the impression of transitory facts and maintain our confidence in ourselves? They are not aware that there is nothing on earth so fragile as a dominion founded merely on force; that a people without faith in its masters despises though it obeys them, and waits only for a reverse to escape from their rule; that masters without morality and without belief cannot long preserve harmony together; and that when they have destroyed their common enemy they will destroy one another. They do not know that the world is full of hidden causes, which appear, at once, at the voice of Providence, and snap in sunder like a thread the most cunning productions of man. They do not know, in fine, in their seclusion from the world, that there are many who think with them in the depths of their souls; that they are numerous when they suppose that they are feeble, and that in the consciousness

of every man who is oppressed, blinded or corrupted, there is a secret voice, which speaks of liberty, of truth, of virtue, and which will produce, when the time arrives, those rapid conversions, by which an unlooked for multitude of proselytes will be made to throng around the standard of the holy cause.

Of all these facts they are ignorant, they fly from the world and take refuge in solitude, where far from the contamination of the people and the impious eyes of authority, they secretly nourish their proscribed and powerless convictions. Warmed by indignation and by the concentrated fires of a nature, which has no sphere of action out of itself, all the germs of lofty virtues, of sublime ideas, of noble sentiments, are rapidly unfolded, and shooting up together, intertwined and knotted in mutual support, produce in a short time those stoical characters, which flash forth in days of oppression, at once protest against it, at once prostrate it to the dust, and which appear gigantic to ordinary ages, that can neither explain nor equal them.

It is in this retreat of the true representatives of humanity—for the rest only wear its form—that a new life is given to those great truths, moral, political and religious, which in one shape or another are destined to govern the world, and which have been crushed under the forms of the ancient dogma. These truths are freshly manifested to the small number, who have not despaired of them, they appear before them free from every cloud, in their own unsullied beauty, because they meet with virgin intelligences, born of skepticism without faith, but with the need of finding one,—indispensable conditions of the pure perception of

truth, and which are reproduced only in epochs like these.

The legitimate empire of truth now recommences, and such a strong sympathy exists between this and our nature, that its return awakens the soul to an inexpressible enthusiasm and love. He who has received it becomes another being. He is no longer a man. He is no longer a philosopher. He is a Prophet. His whole soul is so possessed by the ascendancy of truth, that he forgets himself, devotes to it all that he has and all that he is, and even becomes transformed into its nature. He is the truth personified. It is her voice that speaks in his actions, her authority that is announced in his words, he has no other interest, no other concern; he is the Apostle, and, if necessary, he will be the martyr of the new law.

In ordinary times, the moral elevation of characters like these produces astonishment. This is because no one has seen the terrible spectacle of a community without faith, abandoned entirely to selfishness; because no one has felt the sickening oppression of a power with no other rule than its own interest, no other limit than its own force, making a sport of perjury and fraud, and despising morality and mankind. It is this contrast which is required by the kingdom of justice and of truth, in order to display its sublime and transporting character; it is this contrast which makes it appear, at the close of revolutions, as the salvation of the world, which, makes its coming the sole object of interest with those who have presaged it, and which renders this coming so necessary that no earthly power can prevent it.

As time passes on and with it, the disgust at what is and the looking for of truth become more general, a great number of minds, even among those who have not sought it, are found to be more or less enlightened. All will be apostles or proselytes, soldiers or chiefs of the new faith. This faith is already born. It is living in the hearts of many, it is waited for by all; for every one is sensible of a vague disquietude, of which this faith is the unknown object, and which this alone can pacify. Its enemies are worn out, divided, despised. The ancient leaders are no more, and in spite of their ardor to form disciples worthy of themselves, they could make nothing with ignorance and fanaticism but men who are less to be feared than abhorred. The party has lost the sinews of its strength; it has become a tottering show; as soon as a word is spoken, as soon as a signal is given, it will be abandoned by every body. At length the time comes and two things are inevitable; that the new faith should be proclaimed, and that it should take possession of society.

How will this great consummation be brought about? What peculiar circumstances will determine its appearance in this place rather than in that, on one day rather than another? There is no absolute and necessary rule for this. In some cases, power falls asunder by its own weight and leaves the field free for him to reign who will. In some cases, an external event presses upon it and decides the manifestation of truth; sometimes a trivial circumstance, unexpected and apparently insignificant, brings upon the stage a man who speaks, and his word enkindles a conflagration; sometimes it is an enthusiastic prophet who can-

not resist the truth with which he is inspired, and who makes his appearance on a sudden, strong in his mission and in his zeal. The man, the place, the occasion, the time are of no consequence; the force of things inevitably brings on the promulgation for which it has prepared and the obstacles to which it has previously cast down.

Thus the ruin of the party of the old dogma is completed, and the new one introduced. As to the old dogma itself, it has been dead for a long time.

V.

THE SORBONNE AND THE PHILOSOPHERS.

1824.

Previously to the eighteenth century, there was far more order in the sciences than at present. The intellectual world was divided into distinct kingdoms, with fixed and precise limits, which had their respective manners and customs, their languages, their duties of entry and departure, and their representatives to the Sorbonne, which was the congress, as it were, of this great confederacy. Each science governed in its own way, independent of the others and of the people; its rank was assigned by a magnificent hierarchy, according to its dignity; it was clothed with forms which made it impenetrable to the uninitiated and surrounded it with a majestic obscurity. With these wise precautions, the learned of one department were not disturbed in their investigations by the learned of another, nor controlled in their assertions by the objections of the multitude. The four faculties mutually respected each other, and made common cause to retain the monopoly of ideas. It was not a difficult task; the fashionable world was engaged with something else, and the people were learning to read. Besides, the spirit of inquiry, which has since made so much progress, was at that time prudently suppressed by the monarch. The court, the city, the provinces, received the decisions of the

Sorbonne as oracles, without meddling with the reasons. This was a charming time, the time of order, of faith, of repose. The existence of a doctor, was no less agreeable than tranquil, and not even the Canons of the Holy Chapel were more happy.

Whether so great account was not made of the people as at present, or whether the truth was estimated at a higher rate, the opinion of a noble peer of our own age was not then adopted; it was not believed that the mass of the people had more mental ability than a few individuals; science was regarded as a revelation which descended only into certain privileged understandings, or as a sacred deposit which should be transmitted only to men carefully prepared and chosen to receive it. It was feared that it could not be scattered without being lost, that if committed to the multitude it would suffer desecration. It was enough for the people to be directed according to its principles; but it was deemed neither possible nor lawful that they should comprehend them. Such were the doctrines of the grand age.

But in the eighteenth century, every thing was changed; the audacious attempts of Bayle, the incursion of Pascal into the domain of theology, the pleasantries of Molière in medicine, and the taste of certain Jesuits for popularity, had presented the pernicious example of introducing the public into the deliberations of science, and of appealing to its judgment upon the highest matters. These noxious seeds of disorder bore their fruit. Fontenelle appeared, who placed astronomy at the feet of the ladies; then Montesquieu, then Voltaire, and then—all was lost. A singular

overthrow of ideas took place, a revolution of principles, thorough as it was surprising. Before, science descended upon the people from the domes of the Sorbonne, in apothegms approved and paraphrased by the Dean of this venerable Senate; the people immediately inclined their ear and believed; they durst not resist with an opinion of their own, and submitted to their schoolmasters in peace. But in the eighteenth century, a spirit of opposition to discipline was diffused through the public; common sense appeared to gain confidence in itself and to rebel against the decisions of legitimate authority. This new power rapidly gained strength, as it was encouraged in its revolt by the flatteries of certain writers. It soon passed from resistance to attack; it was young, impetuous, without reproach; the Sorbonne, like all ancient authorities, was laden with sins. Men called to mind the circulation of the blood and many other singular decisions; the Sorbonne was dethroned. Public opinion which had so long knelt at the feet of science, now saw science kneeling at its feet, soliciting its approbation and submitting to its judgment. From that time, all forms were changed in the republic of letters. The new sovereigns, the people, gave the law, imposed their own language, destroyed the barriers which fenced in the learned in insulated flocks, and overthrew the hierarchy of the sciences; all became equal, all could comprehend and criticise one another; all were obliged to legitimate themselves, by taking the livery of common sense. It was thought pedantic to speak Latin, to make use of the words of the school, not to be intelligible to every body; this was the mark of a special

professor, of a man who was acquainted only with his own department. Geometricians were heard talking of poetry and poets of theology—Cardinals composed songs and Abbés romances; even females wrote on natural philosophy. Thus every body was anxious to conceal science under the forms of good sense, to lose the scholar in the man of the world. And with good reason. For who was it, whose favor was sought? The people. Who applauded or condemned? The people. Who distributed the caps of the doctors? The people. They were sovereigns in the world of ideas. Now it was not perceived that this sovereignty would lead to another, and that to make them the judges of ideas was to make them the judges of things; a revolution in politics was the end of the revolution in letters, so closely connected are action and thought.

It was one of the consequences of this new spirit, that the authority which was before limited to the body of scholars, passed into the saloons, which now became the clubs of this democracy. The people being clothed with the functions of judges, must needs pass judgment; as they were not the writers, they must needs assemble to discuss and pronounce sentence in conversation; and this they did in the saloons, with an unlimited and absolute authority. Assemblies were held at the houses of certain females, which had nothing in common with those of the *Hotel de Rambouillet* but the sex of the president. These were not called together for the mind to be exercised upon words, but for opinions to be formed upon ideas. They were, at once, legislative assemblies, where it was decided what should be thought about every thing that came up, and

special juries before which scholars and authors of every description made their appearance to read their productions and submit them to judgment. The members, it is true, were not nominated by the people, but they were considered, on account of their eminence, as their natural representatives, and, in fact, composed a true government which emanated from them, and which administered, in their name, the authority obtained over the discredited Sorbonne.

The people now wanted nothing to complete the organization of their sovereignty but a journal which should publish their opinions and sentiments. The philosophers were born of this want; a class of writers entirely new and hitherto unknown. In the seventeenth century, there were none but scholars, because in every department of human knowledge, there was but a single opinion, that of the special individuals who were devoted to its cultivation. In theology, there was only one way of thinking, that of the theologians; it was the same in medicine, in jurisprudence, in metaphysics. The people had nothing to do but to listen, and to make use of the fine things which they were taught. But in the eighteenth century, when they took a fancy to comprehend before they believed, and to examine before they applauded, they came also to have an opinion of their own; and hence arose two different opinions, that of the scholars and that of the people; the scholars proposing ideas for reception and the people accepting or rejecting them, in the capacity of judges. Hence, also, there were two classes of writers; the inferior one, that of the scholars, because it was judged; the superior one, because it was the

judge, that of the critics or philosophers, who were charged with the duty of expressing the opinion of the sovereign people and promulgating its decrees. The philosophers were the executive power of this literary democracy, as the Sorbonne had been that of the scientific aristocracy of the previous age. Like the Sorbonne, the people reigned as absolute masters. An epigram or a flattering letter of Voltaire decided the failure or success of a work.

Such were the two celebrated dynasties, of which the principle of one was the superiority of special individuals over the people; of the other, that of the people over special individuals in matters of truth. If these two dynasties had ceased to exist, we might perhaps endeavor to point out to our readers the merits and defects of each, and might show, that in the intellectual, no less than in the political world, there are no small inconveniences, as well when the people are every thing, as when they are nothing. But fortunately, we have no need of pursuing our task as historians so far. We live in such a favorable time that we have the advantage of a personal knowledge both of the Sorbonne and of philosophy. These two dynasties, after reigning exclusively, one after the other, and exhibiting the full extent of their powers, appear to have met together at the commencement of the nineteenth century, in order to reproach and to injure each other in the eyes of the future; and as in accusing its adversary, neither forgets to sing its own praises, we need only listen to them and we shall learn all the good and the evil which can be known of both.

Now, we certainly do not flatter ourselves that we

are representatives of the future; but if we may judge by the tranquil indifference with which we contemplate this debate, at least we do not belong to the past, neither to that of the eighteenth century, nor to that of the seventeenth; for we cannot but be amazed ourselves at the impartiality with which we view such contrary pretensions and such an animated quarrel. Could it be thought possible? We read M. de Bonald and M. Benjamin Constant with the same apathy; we run through the *Catholic Memorial* and the *Mercury* with the same admiration; and in spite of the excellent sermons which are preached on both sides, our heart is not touched; we feel no inclination, either for the philosophy of the eighteenth century, which pretends that the nineteenth belongs to it, as a child to its parent, or for the reverend Jesuit fathers who declare that it belongs to the Sorbonne, because the Sorbonne is more ancient and therefore more legitimate than philosophy. It is a little singular, that while they are disputing for the possession of us, we can look upon the combat, with no interest but that of curiosity; we smile at the blows which are dealt by our future masters to each other, as if we were so corrupt, as not to care, to which of the two we shall belong, or so strong, as not to fear that we shall be taken possession of by either.

And, in truth, when we consider the question a little nearer, we are inclined to believe that of these two explanations of our indifference, the latter is the correct one; not that we have a high opinion of ourselves, or that we despise either of the dynasties that are offered to us, but because it appears to us that the time for them to possess and to govern has passed away. No

doubt, the Sorbonne was a fine thing, and philosophy an admirable thing; but pray why have these two fine things both fallen? For the Sorbonne has been out of sight for a century; and if it now returns, it is a resurrection; and on the other hand, if the exclusive dynasty of the sovereignty of the people is not yet annihilated, it is at least on the decline, and decline, for a dominant opinion, is death. Why then, we ask again, have these two excellent things come to the ground? When philosophy took the place of the Sorbonne, where did it obtain arms against it? Not, it is clear, from the merits of the Sorbonne; but it was by pointing out the defects of the old dynasty, that the new planted itself upon its ruins. And now that the Sorbonne is reviving and takes a stand against philosophy, how does it happen that philosophy, fallen from the eminence which it held, cannot withstand the progress of the former? The reason is that philosophy also is not free from inconveniences, that these inconveniences have been brought to light and have cast it down to a level with the Sorbonne. In the struggle which has ensued between philosophy in its last agonies, and the old dynasty in its renewed strength, what do we hear? Reproaches, recriminations. The two parties can do nothing but by mutual accusations, they remind each other of their sins, and appear, each of them, to possess no other claim to authority than the vices of the opposite party. Now the misfortune is, that they are both right, and that they prove this beyond a doubt. They speak with so much force, that we cannot but be convinced as we hear them; we should call them two bad subjects, who reproach each

other with their crimes; and we resolve, after listening to their story, to place no confidence in either.

It is not then our own force which renders us impregnable to the Sorbonne and to the philosophy of the eighteenth century; it is the force of things, that force which brings a stain over the past and throws a charm around the future, which gives power to whatever is new and takes it from whatever is old, and by which the world is carried forward instead of backward. Have many abolished dynasties been seen to recover their strength, and to flourish for a second time, many dethroned opinions to take new possession of the mind and to regain their ascendancy? If such events have been witnessed, it was at distant intervals, when the defects of the reviving dynasty, the weak sides of the restored opinion, have fallen into oblivion. But for the Sorbonne, whose faults are declared by philosophy, and for philosophy, whose imperfections are pointed out by the Sorbonne, such good fortune appears to us impossible. The age has escaped from their hands and demands another dynasty; not that this new dynasty must needs be more perfect, but that it will seem to be so, before experience shall have made known its errors and defects. The Sorbonne and philosophy are like two dying men, who dispute with each other which shall live, or like the two thieves in the fable, who were fighting for the possession of the ass which they had stolen, while a third person came up who mounted and rode away.

Whether this explanation of our indifference be as good as we suppose, or whether we deceive ourselves in the matter, it is certain that we are indifferent; and

this fact, it is well to point out to the belligerent parties, to enable them to perceive that the generation which succeeds them, and whose opinion they are contending for, does not feel that interest in their quarrels which they imagine, and that without knowing precisely the direction which it is to take, it is at least confident that it will not be drawn back into the old tracks, nor enkindled again with the fire of their ancient passions. If it shall then seem good to the reverend Jesuit fathers and to the respectable friends of the philosophy of the eighteenth century, to continue the combat, we have not the slightest objection; they are perfectly free and we are not annoyed at the spectacle.

We only ask that the rights of a spectator may be granted us, and that we may be allowed to make certain suggestions and observations, which seem called for by good sense.

For example, we would take the liberty of remarking to both parties, that if they would promote the triumph of their principles, it is desirable that they should comprehend them; for what is a preacher who does not know his religion? Now, if we look at the means taken by the great writers on both sides to recommend their doctrine, we should hardly suppose that they understood it. How does it happen that the editors of the *Catholic Memorial* publish a journal? How can we account for it, that M. de La Mennais, and so many other partisans of authority, undertake to reason with the public, and to appeal to common sense?

Is not this saying to the people; "our adversaries contend that you are the only judges of truth; we maintain, that you are incapable of judging of it, and

that whenever you meddle with it, your judgment is good for nothing; we now appeal to you for your opinion and call upon you to decide." Is it possible that the people can refrain from laughing at a proposal like this, that they will embrace a doctrine which cannot be proved but by a contradiction? On the other hand, how does it happen, that the able philosophers of the *Minerva* and the *Constitutional* accuse their adversaries of preaching to the people and infecting their minds with false opinions; that they are troubled by seeing a part of the public yield to these exhortations; that they perpetually invoke the authority of the great names of the eighteenth century? Are not these so many proofs, either that they do not comprehend their own principles, or that these principles are not true? For if the people be the sovereign judges of truth, how can it be said that they have been deceived or that they have deceived themselves? Why wish to impose private opinions upon them which have no weight but that of authority? Why decline receiving their decisions and appeal to other quarters? We would, then, offer the friendly suggestion to both parties, that they endeavor to be more consistent; that they do not show themselves, on the one side, appealing to the spirit of inquiry in order to prove authority, and on the other, denying the competence of public opinion, in order to defend it. If the people are not to judge but to believe, why, then, give them catechisms and not journals; but if they are the only judges of truth, then, submit to their decisions.

Next to consistency, what we most sincerely wish to the two parties, is justice. We do not ask for that

good faith, which allows an adversary to be in the right, and ourselves to be in the wrong, when this is the case; for this would be asking too much; we ask only for that justice which respects the person, while it combats his opinion, and which does not stigmatize the author in order to discredit his doctrine. This applies equally to both parties, but particularly to the authors of the *Catholic Memorial* who appear to us to have a very peculiar predilection for this kind of criticism.

We agree with them that if authority be the only guarantee for the truth of an assertion, the best mode of proving an opinion to be false is to throw suspicion upon its author. We acknowledge that their method of attacking the life of a philosopher instead of discussing his principles is perfectly consistent. But, in fine, since these estimable writers live on one inconsequence, that is, their journal, they may, perhaps, be induced to admit another far less grave, in favor of justice, and on account of which, I am sure, the public would never wish to quarrel with them; I mean, that they should pay some small respect to the persons of their adversaries; for since the writings of Pascal, it is generally acknowledged, that though it is good to obtain the triumph of our cause, it is bad to do so by unjust means.

Once more, if it were hatred of evil actions which prompted personal attacks, we might forgive such zeal to the preachers of morality; but there is no hostility to individuals except what proceeds from hostility to their opinions; and this makes the matter less disinterested, and far less edifying. Is it then so great a

crime to think in one manner rather than in another, that whoever is guilty of it must be placed beyond the law of justice? We wish, with all our heart, that they who are so prodigal of hatred and denunciation against the ashes of the dead and the persons of the living, on account of their opinions, would reflect a little on the mode, in which an opinion is adopted, and would investigate, with a little more precision, the exact point, to which he who has embraced it is responsible for having embraced it. We believe, that if they would detach their inquiry from all considerations of passion, they would soon arrive at the conviction of the injustice and absurdity, which every act of intolerance supposes.

Can there be, for example, any thing more ridiculous, than to be angry with the philosophers of the eighteenth century for having thought as they did? It is just as if we should be displeased with the top which spins under the whip of the child; it is not the top which is to blame, but the child. When the people of France had learned to read, was it possible for them not to read? Could they read without comprehending, and comprehend, without believing or doubting? To believe certain things, to doubt certain others, is not this to have an opinion? And did ever any opinion, sublime or ridiculous, good or bad, fail of representatives? Is there any thing in the moral world, in the physical world, more necessary, more inevitable? Does the top turn more fatally under the whip which lashes it? It is not then Voltaire, who is to blame, nor his friends; it is their age; it is not they who are to be called in question for their opinions;

but their epoch. Look at the facts which prove this. If Voltaire had been born fifty years sooner, it is beyond a doubt that he would have played a different part from what he did. Perhaps, as a rival of Corneille and Racine, he would have passed his life in the composition of tragedies; perhaps, he would have been a Jesuit, a doctor of the Sorbonne; no matter what; any thing but a philosopher. And why? Because philosophy is the judgment of the people; and in the seventeenth century, the people did not judge but believed. Thus, for want of philosophy, there could be no philosophers; for want of public opinion, no representatives of public opinion. Of all the ideas, with which Voltaire and his friends have been reproached, Voltaire and his friends could have had none fifty years sooner; they, accordingly, are not chargeable upon them, but upon their epoch. A hundred years sooner, Luther would have been a saint, and perhaps a Pope.[1]

Do we assert by this, that nothing is absolutely true or absolutely false, that opinions are like fashions, beautiful when they are adopted, and ugly when they are laid aside? This is far from being our meaning. We regard it as absolutely true that two and two make four, and as absolutely false that two and two make five; but we think also that no age has believed or will believe that two and two make five; we think that what is false can never become the opinion of an epoch. The human mind does not travel from truth to error and from error to truth, but from one truth to another, or, to speak more correctly, from one face of truth to

[1] See Note F.

another. If one age possessed all truth, all beauty, all justice; science, art, and morality would be eternally fixed, and the prevailing modes of opinion would experience no change. The reason why we admire Shakspeare after admiring Racine, is that Racine is beautiful in one way and Shakspeare in another; the reason why public virtues are sometimes sacrificed to private virtues and sometimes private virtues to public virtues, is that neither the one nor the other comprehend the whole of virtue. If special individuals have for some time commanded the public, and public opinion, in its turn, has prevailed over that of scholars, it is because the point of view taken by scholars is more profound, though it be more limited, while that of the people is more comprehensive, though it be more superficial. As soon as the narrow, exclusive and mechanical character of the Sorbonne, in matters of science, was brought to light, the appeal was made to common sense, as larger, more liberal, more complete; just as at the present day, when we begin to feel the defects of common sense as too superficial, light and skeptical, we grow tired of it and long for something else.

In one age, it is only the ruins of the past age which oppose the current, but always without success; after these have been swept away, unity of opinion is formed, and is not disturbed again, until this opinion begins to grow old, and the harbingers of the coming age appear and begin to speak. Thus, at the commencement and at the close, dissension is possible and even necessary, but it does not exist in the bosom of the epoch itself. And when an age is thus preoccupied with a certain face of truth, of morality, and of beauty, how can it be

desired that a child of this age should abjure the belief, the tastes, the virtues of his epoch, and adopt others, of which he cannot even form a conception? By what right, does the man, who belongs to another age and is devoted to other opinions, reproach him with what he has thought, admired and loved, and summon him before an incompetent tribunal to vindicate himself from a crime, for which he is not accountable, because it is that of his age, from a crime which is not a crime, because truth, under all its faces, is worthy of reverence and love? What would the age of Louis XIV. say, if it could rise again, and judge, according to its ideas, our Romantic School, by which it is judged, according to its own? What would be said by the Athenians, preoccupied with a republic, if they could be made acquainted with our honorable deputies, preoccupied with monarchy? What would be thought of our public virtues by Brutus, whom we so proudly condemn for his paternal severity? In short what would Voltaire say of M. de La Mennais, or Franklin of the *Quotidienne?*

And since we must needs declare the whole, let us say still further, an age is no more to blame for its opinions, than individuals for the opinions of their age. For why does an age embrace a new opinion which is peculiar to it? Is it by chance that it approves the opinion of the preceding age? Is it not, on the contrary, a necessity of human nature, to believe what appears to it true; and to reject what appears to it false? And if this be the case, when one epoch rejects the opinion of a preceding epoch, is it not clear, that this is because it has discovered, if not

the utter falsehood, at least, the imperfections and defects of the opinion? And whose fault is it, if it be struck with these imperfections, but that of the preceding age itself, which permitted them to continue? It is this which ought to be complained of, if its opinions are abandoned, and not the age which abandons them. What gave birth to Protestantism but the abuses of Catholicism? What was the cause of the rigorous dynasty of Louis XIV. but the excesses of Protestantism? What was the source of the liberty of the eighteenth century, but the mischiefs of the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth? And to whom are we indebted for the Jesuits, but to the philosophers?

Thus an age is responsible neither for what it is nor for what it thinks, one age proceeds from another, one opinion from another opinion. And if we accuse this other age, this other opinion, we shall find that they are not chargeable with what they have been, nor consequently, with what they have produced. So that they who love to bring accusations, compelled to pursue the criminal from one age to another, will finally arrive at the first man; and he will throw the blame for what he has thought upon his own nature, that is, upon human nature, the real source of the evil, because being weak, it can see but a corner of the truth, and being presumptuous, it always believes and proclaims that it has found out the whole.

Thus the accusation fails for want of a criminal. There is nobody to burn; nobody even to hate; a sad thing for those good souls. Nothing remains but to become tolerant or to continue to be absurd. In this awkward dilemma, the greater number will always take

the latter course, because reason, in the presence of passion, like unconcern in the presence of death, is a thing that even the greatest characters find it hard to preserve.

VI.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY.

1825.

I. THE PRINCIPLE OF HUMAN PROGRESS.

The great distinction which separates man from the lower animals, is that the condition of the latter does not change with the lapse of ages, while that of man is subject to perpetual movement and transformation.

The condition of beavers and bees is the same to-day, that it was on the morning of creation; the condition of man in society changes with every age, it is modified with every year, in some respects, in fact, it is altered with every day.

It is the purpose of history to collect these changes. It registers passing events so that they may not be forgotten. The philosophy of history neglects the changes themselves and regards only the general fact of human mobility, of which they are the manifestation. It investigates the cause and the law of this mobility.

In truth, this movement, which gives a fluctuating character to the human race, must, of necessity, have a principle; and as the effect is limited to man, a principle which acts on him alone. Now what is this principle? Where is it to be sought?

Not in the theatre, on which man is placed for developement. This theatre, which is nature, is common to him with the brutes, that do not change; this thea-

tre, besides, is the same to-day that it was yesterday, that it always will be. Human mobility cannot come from this.

If it does not come from the theatre, then it comes from the actor. Then there is a principle of change in man, which is not in the brute.

The conduct of man is acted on and determined by two moving powers; the tendencies of his nature, and the ideas of his intelligence concerning the different ends which these tendencies seek.

When he obeys the first of these influences, which is instinctive and blind, he acts passionately; when he obeys the second, which is enlightened and reflective, he acts reasonably. The first predominates in infancy; the second, in mature life and in old age.

The tendencies of human nature are invariable like itself; they are the same at every epoch and in every place. The ideas of human intelligence vary from one time to another, in one country and another; they vary like human knowledge, and human knowledge increases and declines.

If the condition of the brutes does not change, it is because their actions are invariably determined by the tendencies of their nature which are invariable. If the condition of man varies in one country and another, from one epoch to another, it is because the actions of man are not invariably determined by the tendencies of his nature which are invariable, but still more by the ideas of his intelligence which are essentially changeable.

The principle of the mobility of human things is, therefore, in the mobility of the ideas of human intelligence.

All the changes which take place in the condition of man, all the transformations which it has undergone proceed then from intelligence and are the effect of it; the history of these changes, then, in the last analysis, is only the history of the ideas which have succeeded one another in human intelligence, or if it be preferred, the history of the intellectual developement of humanity.

II. THE PURPOSE OF HISTORY.

But, when we consider the subject, we perceive that the history of these changes comprehends all history. For there are but too great elements in the world, the immutable and the changing; the immutable is the object of science, the changing that of history; now, every thing which does not proceed from human liberty, is immutable even in change; for if it changes, it is by immutable laws; that alone cannot be immutable which depends on man; for while we are certain *a priori* that the action of natural forces is subject to constant laws, we are not yet certain, that intelligence, which is the law of human force, has a regular developement. And this accounts for the fact, that while natural changes are perpetually passing from the domain of history to that of science, those changes which are the work of man, are not submitted to science, and appear, as though they must remain, for a long time at least, if not for ever, scattered and insulated in the depository of history.

If history, then, has a peculiar object which it should not lose sight of, that is to say, if there be any thing in the world truly changing, it is the works of man.

The object of history, then, in the only legitimate acceptation of the word, is the developement of human intelligence, as it is manifested by the external changes, which at different epochs, have been produced by this developement.

The point at which these changes have arrived at a certain epoch and in a certain country, constitutes the human condition at this epoch and in this country. The history of these changes, then, is the history of the developement of the human condition, as it is that of the developement of human intelligence.

Developement of human intelligence, successive changes in ideas, successive effects of these changes or developement of the human condition; this is the logical order.

History embraces all these changes within its compass; but it does not proceed from cause to effect; it necessarily follows the inverse order. Ideas are invisible to it, effects alone are within its reach; these effects are the materials which it gathers up, materials of every nature and character, from which it infers ideas, concluding from the sign to the thing signified, or from the effect to the cause; this is the historical order.

There are, then, but three great historical questions, or in other words, the changing element in the world presents but three problems for solution; first, what has been the human condition or the visible form of humanity from the beginning to the present time; secondly, what has been human intelligence or the developement of the ideas of humanity from the beginning to the present time; and thirdly, the correspond-

ence between these two developements, or how the developement of ideas has produced the developement of the visible form of humanity from the beginning to the present time. This is the field of history.

III. RELATION OF HISTORY TO SCIENCE.

The majority of historians confine themselves to facts, and they often notice only the most unimportant part of these facts. Thus, many have written, who forgetting the political and religious institutions, the arts, the private life and the industry of nations, have confined themselves to describing the life of kings, the battles and treaties, the rise and fall of empires,—a species of facts, which are nothing but the consequences of the former, as these in their turn are nothing but the consequences and the signs of the movement of ideas.

The writers, who have introduced the history of manners and institutions into history, have created a revolution. They enjoy the reputation of having penetrated to the root of the subject. They have received the name of philosophical historians. And yet they have only arrived at second causes. The cause of these causes is contained in the developement of intelligence, or the succession of ideas; the philosophy of history must be carried to this point, and the comprehending of this is the glory of our age.

And as soon as it shall be understood that human intelligence is subject in its developement to constant laws, the succession of ideas itself will become only a second cause; and the philosophy of history again

changing its object, will legitimately apply itself only to the explanation of the succession of ideas for the necessary laws of intellectual developement. When that time arrives, history will entirely perish; it will no longer have an object; science will have taken its place in the domain of the modifications of humanity, as it has already taken its place in the domain of the modifications of nature.

Such is the course which history has always taken, even to the present day. It has advanced from events to institutions, and to manners which are nothing but more general events; from institutions and manners to the succession of ideas, which in itself is nothing but a series of still more general events. It has thus resolved what is most subject to change into that which is least so; effects the most palpable and diversified into their immediate causes, which are themselves effects of other causes still more general. But it has not yet reached the fixed and immutable law which presides over its whole developement. Hence, the time has not come for it to lose its independent existence and to be resolved into science. It is now verging towards this point; for it is attempting to discover the law of the succession of ideas, encouraged as it is by the discovery of the laws of the succession of natural phenomena. Will it succeed in this attempt? Perhaps it will. But we may safely predict that if this grand conquest is reserved for it, it is still far distant; for the steps of the sanctuary are as yet inaccessible. The succession of ideas, the immediate cause of the succession of institutions, of religions, of manners,—has, by no means, been sufficiently determined. But

this is not all. Have we a sufficient knowledge of the institutions, the religions and the manners, of different epochs and of different countries? Do we even know sufficiently the events, which these have produced and by which alone they can be revealed to us? But without the knowledge of all these circumstances, each of which throws light on the other, how can we attempt to discover the law of ideas, which if it exists, must be their most general expression and summary?

It is, therefore, on the successive steps, which alone can conduct to the science of that which has hitherto been limited to history, that the efforts of historians should be concentrated; and, above all, on the developement of ideas, the part which has thus far been the least thoroughly investigated, since it is still in the cradle, while the other two, which are to precede it, have already acquired, more or less, the characteristics of maturity.

IV. SPONTANEOUS DEVELOPEMENT OF INTELLIGENCE.

The developement of human intelligence is of a twofold nature, as well in humanity as a mass, as in human society considered in its separate relations, and as in an individual in his personal mental growth; it is spontaneous and reflective.

Suppose that an individual never seeks to obtain ideas, nor to explain those which he has, nor to give an account of them to himself; this individual, endowed with an intelligence, which, without his own will, possesses a consciousness of all that passes within it and around it, will receive ideas without seeking for

them, from himself and from external objects; he will combine these ideas, draw inferences, form judgments and opinions, establish principles, and all without suspecting what he is doing or without seeking to do it; the natural movement of his intelligence goes on without him; his own wants, even without his thinking of it, constantly increase the energy of this movement; they direct it unknown to him; and from the bosom of this spontaneous developement proceeds a series of ideas which determine his conduct and which will constitute his condition.

In this manner, a community naturally developes itself, whose generalized intelligence always advances spontaneously. Without any design, without any definite end, without method and without research, it obtains a certain amount of ideas, by virtue of which, it forms such or such a religion, such or such a government, such or such manners, such or such industry. And from these institutions, these manners, this industry,—the natural offspring of its ideas,—proceed in their turn, its prosperity or its misery, its force or its feebleness, its successes or its defeats in war, the character of its alliances, its treaties, its commerce, the condition of its subjects and its rulers, the whole detail of events, in short, of which its history is composed.

The same thing that happens with regard to an individual, and to a community, must take place also, with regard to the aggregate of communities or humanity, which considered as a mass is developed without its own knowledge or will. Whenever a philosopher can embrace a sufficiently long series of ages, he will perceive it changing its ideas, like a people or an indi-

vidual, and producing at immense intervals those general events which will be the result and the expression of such changes.

The individual, society, and humanity differ only with regard to the scale of developement. The developement is equally spontaneous and equally constant in each of the three cases; but it is accomplished with different degrees of rapidity. In the life of man, the revolutions of ideas are separated only by a few years; in a community, an age is required for a single step; and a hundred ages are needed for the progress of humanity. This is because human revolutions are composed of social revolutions, and each of these latter, of individual revolutions. Now, before the same revolution of ideas can be participated in by all the members of any community, the force of things must have time to bring the intelligence of every individual to the same point, by paths which differ both in their direction and their length; and before a revolution of the same nature can extend to all communities, it is necessary that each should arrive at the same point in its own way, according to its own ability. So slow is the progress of an operation like this, that the intellectual harmony of all the communities of our narrow globe, is a phenomenon still waited for and which does not promise to be speedily brought about. This result was promised to Christianity; it still professes the ability to accomplish it, and it is towards this end, that the efforts of Bible and Missionary Societies are directed.

Such is the spontaneous developement of human intelligence; an incontestable fact in man, society and humanity; a fact which is the parent of all other

facts and which presides over individuals, empires and the world.

V. REFLECTIVE DEVELOPEMENT OF INTELLIGENCE.

But whilst in the greater part of mankind, intelligence is developed only in this blind and involuntary manner, a developement of a freer and more enlightened character takes place in certain individuals; and after it is once born, it never dies. This is the reflective or philosophical developement.

In truth, the faculties of man are not independent powers over which he has no control, and which he is doomed to leave to their own arbitrary course and operation. He is endowed with authority over them, he can make use of them for himself, as the skilful mechanician commands and makes use of fire, of water, of steam, and of other natural forces.

The dominion, which has been given him over his faculties in general, he possesses over his intelligence, in particular; he can divert it from its natural movement and apply it to the investigation of truths which interest him, to the examination of questions with which he is preoccupied.

Now when he does this, two things take place; first, all the force of his intelligence, instead of being scattered in different directions, is concentrated on a single point; secondly, his intelligence, attracted by this point, rests upon it for a long time. This concentration on the one hand and this persistency on the other, constitute the state of attention; and intelligence, when attentive is infinitely more powerful than when it is not.

When the will, therefore, imposes this mode of developement upon intelligence, it becomes more luminous, and being more luminous, it discovers truth with greater rapidity.

There is no human intelligence which does not share, in some degree, in this mode of developement. But though it occasionally takes the place of spontaneous developement in all men, it does not become habitual, and consequently does not produce any great effects, except in certain individuals. These are distinguished from the crowd; instead of waiting for truth, they pursue it, instead of falling in with it, they seek it out; these are the philosophers.

It is by them, that in the bosom of the natural and fundamental developement of human intelligence, which is spontaneous, another is produced, which is voluntary, the reflective and philosophical developement.

Human intelligence is always carried forward by this twofold movement, spontaneous in the masses which do not seek for truth, voluntary in the philosophers who do seek for it.

Now, of these two movements, the voluntary and reflective movement must necessarily precede the other in the common route; that is to say, the philosophers who seek for truth must find it sooner, than the masses which do not seek for it. Hence, all the mechanism of the developement of human intelligence, and the function of each of the two movements which we have just described in this developement.

These two movements proceed towards the same end; they obey the same law, that of progress; but not having the same velocity, one is always before the

other; and as they act upon each other, the most rapid accelerates the slowest and the slowest retards the most rapid, so that the velocity of the developement of humanity is the resultant of the unequal velocity of these two movements.

When the philosophers who march in front have discovered the truth, they proclaim it; and in proclaiming it, they reveal it to the masses which would not have found it until a later period. Hence, they accelerate the movement of the masses. But the reason of the masses does not accept this new light without resistance. It requires time to shake off the yoke of habit, to comprehend the truth which is announced, and to appropriate it to itself, by bringing it down from the abstract forms of science to the practical forms of common sense. This teaching is a slow process, the philosophers are called upon to engage in it, and while it is going on, their own progress is stopped. The slowness of the movement of the masses retards then the philosophical movement.

But while it retards it, it helps to ripen its fruit. The intelligence of the masses, precisely because it seeks nothing and wishes nothing, possesses a certainty and an extent, before which all that is exclusive or false, all that is premature or impracticable in the discoveries of the philosophers, must, at last, vanish away. It is a sieve which retains every error, and which at every epoch allows nothing to pass into the developement of humanity but the ideas for which humanity is ripe. In moderating the rapidity of this developement, the resistance of the masses, then, prevents its mistakes and secures its correctness.

It is by the combination of these two movements, that human ideas are made to advance and to assume new forms; and it is by the progress and transformation of ideas, that, in their turn, the laws, the manners, the institutions, and all the constituent elements of the human condition are transformed and ameliorated. Every thing proceeds in the bosom of humanity by virtue of this law, the largest communities as well as the smallest, the entire mass of humanity as well as each of its elements.

The share of the philosophers in this great movement is perfectly clear. It cannot be said that they are the authors of the doctrines which are current in society, but we may regard them as their precursors and promoters. Humanity would not be immovable, if there were no philosophers. Without them, revolutions would take place, but more slowly. The philosophers hasten them on, and, therefore, appear to produce them. They may justly be called perpetual revolutionists; but this is a title which does not belong to them exclusively; it can be claimed by the masses as well as by them, because, like them, the masses are intelligent, and it is the law of intelligence to advance and consequently to change. In this world, it is intelligence only which is revolutionary, or rather, it is the Creator, by whom intelligence was formed.

This movement of intelligence, by which humanity advances, is one of those whose rapidity increases in its progress. In fact, as civilization advances, the succession of ideas becomes more rapid; its velocity is always in proportion to the diffusion of light; and it is easy to see the reason of this. On the one hand

the number of philosophers is greater, and their discoveries are more rapid, because one helps to the attainment of another; and on the other hand, the masses, as they become more enlightened, find it easier to comprehend. The work of teaching, then, is abridged, as well as that of invention; not to mention the fact that the means of communication are more numerous and more ready. Thus every thing is facilitated by the increase and diffusion of light,—both the reign of every system of ideas, and the operation by which intelligence passes from one system of ideas to another.

VI. NECESSARY SUCCESSION OF EVENTS IN HISTORY.

In order to decide the great question concerning the necessary succession of the events of history, we must consider two elements which enter into the determination of the conduct of man, and consequently into the production of every human event.

These two elements or these two principles are the tendencies or the passions of our nature, on the one hand, and reason or the ideas of our intelligence, on the other. The former urge us to their satisfaction, the latter announce to us what is most true, beautiful and good in conduct. At the bottom, there is no contradiction between these two principles; for what our nature desires is its true good, and it is this, also, which reason seeks to determine, and which all the ideas, that it proposes to us as rules of conduct, endeavor to represent. In reality, then, reason and passion coincide; but the law of passion, which is blind, is to aim at its immediate satisfaction, and, at all times, to obey

the strongest impulse; two things, which are most frequently at open war with the true good, as perceived by enlightened reason. Hence, the eternal combat between these two principles, of which the consciousness of every man is the theatre.

If reason always triumphed in an individual, his conduct would uniformly be the consequence of his ideas, and his ideas being known, we could foresee his conduct. The reason why we are unable to foresee it, even when we know his opinions, is that we cannot divine what part in his determinations will be taken by passion; and that, even supposing we know it, passion is a thing so fluctuating, so capricious, that it is impossible to calculate its movements.

But what is true of the conduct of an individual, is not true in the same degree of the conduct of a people or of a numerous collection of individuals. Here passion has far less influence, and ideas far more.

In fact, in a community, of which all the members are under the influence of the same general ideas, all, having the same opinion as to what is most true, beautiful and good, must of necessity, in any given social circumstances, arrive at the same conclusion, with regard to what ought to be done. But, as all have not the same passions, since they differ in different individuals, these passions, by their very opposition, must neutralize one another in their practical operation. The influence of ideas, on which all are agreed, must then necessarily be superior to that of the passions, which so far from agreeing, are opposed to each other. Hence the fact, that the conduct of a people is far more frequently the result of its ideas, than that

of an individual, and that when the ideas are given, it is less difficult to foresee and to calculate its conduct.

This is the more true, in proportion as public opinion takes part in the direction of the affairs of a people, and the less so, as this direction depends on the will of certain individuals. The number of events, accordingly, in the history of a people, produced by individual passions, and which are not the consequence of its ideas, is in the inverse ratio of the ascendancy of public opinion in the direction of affairs. It is for this reason, that it is far more difficult to calculate the conduct of despotic governments, than that of representative governments, and that of small states, other things being equal, than that of large.

But, on every hypothesis, the influence of individual passions can reach only events of transient and secondary importance; those of greater magnitude are beyond its sphere, because nothing great, nothing permanent can ever be produced among a people, whatever be its government, except by the force and with the support of the convictions of this people itself. Every thing, which can be attempted or accomplished by individual passions, in opposition to these convictions, is soon carried away. It is beyond the power of any despot, of any favorite, of any man of genius, to leave these convictions out of sight, in his enterprises and his institutions; nay more, no one can be a successful despot or a great statesman, but by yielding to them his obedience. In fine, passion acts only on the surface of the history of nations, the foundation is laid in the influence of ideas; it is their logical effect and genuine

expression. They are inevitably transfused into the political, religious, civil, military and domestic institutions of a people, and these institutions, in their turn, inevitably determine all the great circumstances of its history, by which alone its destiny is decided.

Hence we perceive, that if it be unwarrantable to explain every thing in history, by the inevitable developement of ideas, it is still more so, to explain every thing by individual characters and passions.

Of these two systems, the latter was adopted by the historians of antiquity; the former appears to be gaining prevalence among modern historians. The ancient historians explained every thing by the passions and interests, the genius or the incapacity of individuals; the modern historians attempt to reduce every thing to the law of ideas, not excepting those events which are most clearly dependent on the chance of individuals and the caprice of circumstances. Between these two extremes, which render ancient history so dramatic and modern history so logical, we meet with the truth.

The explanation of history by reference to individuals must needs have been adopted by the writers of antiquity. Among historical causes, the passions of the rulers, their ability or their weakness, are the most apparent; and it was these which new-born history would sieze upon, in its infantile curiosity.

Besides, this explanation was not so false in antiquity, as it would be at the present day; individuals, at that time, had really a greater share in events. On the one hand, the dominion of ideas over less enlightened communities is not so strong; and on the other, the chances for the triumph of passion are more nu-

merous in smaller communities. One man could communicate his passions, from the stand of the orator, to the whole Athenian republic, and that, in an instant; with far more genius, and incomparably more time, no one could now communicate his passions to the whole of France. To inspire France with passion, there is but one means, namely, to espouse her passions and to lay aside our own; and the passions of France are only a form of her ideas. Among the passions, those alone can become common to thirty-two millions of people, which proceed from intelligence and which take their origin in a universal conviction; those which spring from a lower source, can never extend so far; they remain merely individual and have not even the power of creating a party.

The influence of individual passions in the small republics of antiquity, is one of the causes, which deprived the general tendencies of a full and decided manifestation, and rendered revolutions of ideas less frequent. In disturbing the empire of intelligence, they retarded its developement.

The world having changed, history must needs have changed with it. Classical history,—history as it was written by the historians of antiquity,—would be absurd at the present day; he who would now reproduce it is condemned to be an imitator. Montesquieu is the legitimate historian of modern times, as Livy was that of ancient times.

VII. DIVINE PROVIDENCE IN HISTORY.

That which is called Providence by Bossuet, destiny by others, and the force of things by others, is the necessary progress of intellectual developement.

The expression of Bossuet is good, but not in the sense of an actual interposition of God. God interposes as little in the regular developement of humanity as in the course of the solar system. And yet he is the author of it. In giving laws to human intelligence, as he has given them to the stars, he has predetermined the course of humanity, as he has established that of the planets. This is his Providence. And his Providence is no less fixed and certain with regard to humanity than it is with regard to the heavenly bodies.

But it is so, in a different manner. For so far from interfering with the liberty of the individual, it presupposes it, and acts only by means of it. All the necessity of human developement results from this circumstance, that if a thousand men have the same idea of good, this idea will govern them, in spite of the opposition and diversity of their passions. Now on what condition is this true? On the single condition, that being endowed with reason and freedom, they are not subjected to the impulse of passion, but can deliberate, reflect, adopt the course which shall seem to them the best, and then act in accordance with it. Take away liberty, the empire of ideas is destroyed, and the necessity which governs humanity, will be succeeded by another entirely different, the necessity of sensual impulse, that which commands the

lower animals, and which holds the medium between the intellectual necessity which governs the moral world, and the mechanical necessity which governs the physical world.

Thus the necessity which governs human affairs rests upon the liberty of human beings. The individual remains free, and responsible because he is free; he is endowed with reason to judge, a will to decide, hands to execute; his actions are imputable to himself; their glory or their shame is his. Crimes are not taken away, nor criminals; virtues and sacrifices continue, and heroes with them, and with heroes the legitimate admiration and the holy gratitude of humanity.

Another distinction between the necessity of the physical world and that of the moral world is that the course of humanity is not in a circle like that of the stars. The stars always recommence the same movements, humanity advances, its movements are progressive; every revolution is a step in the discovery of the True and the Good. This is the reason why the intellectual world is ever improving, whilst the physical world remains the same. The latter is always moving, but makes no progress.

And hence the demonstration that the physical world is made for man. That is the theatre, we are the actors. The actors are not made for the theatre, but the theatre for the actors.

The natural sciences explain the theatre; the philosophical sciences explain the actor; and this is the reason why the former are more advanced than the latter.

VIII. OFFICE OF POETRY.

Poetry gives utterance in song to the sentiments of the epoch on the Good, the Beautiful, and the True. It expresses the indistinct thought of the masses, in a manner that is more animated though not more clear, because it feels this thought more vividly but comprehends it as little. This is comprehended only by philosophy. If poetry comprehended it, it would become philosophy and disappear. For this reason, Pope and Voltaire are philosophers and not poets. For this reason, poetry is more general and more beautiful in comparatively unenlightened ages; and rarer and colder in ages of great improvement. For this reason, in such ages, it is the privilege of the ignorant.

The nature of poetry subjects it to the law of change with popular sentiments; otherwise it would cease to be true. The poet cannot feel the sentiments of another epoch; if he expresses them, he only copies their expression; he is classical; what he produces is not poetry, but the imitation of a poetry which is no more. Hence, mythology is no longer poetical; hence Christianity is less so than formerly; hence liberty would be so preëminently, if we comprehended it less. As the true poets express the sentiments of their epoch, their productions are invaluable monuments for the history of the developement of humanity. But it requires strength to question them to advantage. The philosophers are more distinct, but less certain.[1] The arts

[1] See the explanation of this in the Essay entitled *Philosophy and Common Sense*, Vol. I.

being forms of poetry, their productions also are curious monuments. They present more particularly, it is true, the sentiments of the epoch on the Beautiful; but every thing is connected together in human thought; and a certain idea of the Beautiful must correspond to a certain idea of the True and the Good, in the developement of intelligence; these ideas mutually imply each other. But again, we must have studied profoundly the laws of human nature in order to comprehend and to interpret such testimonies with safety.

The true poets, the true artists are always the children of their age. The philosophers always are so, in regard to their point of departure; but as we have said before, it is their mission to take the lead of their age and to prepare the way for the future. They share the sentiments of their epoch, this is their point of departure; they reflect upon them, they comprehend them, they express them, this is their work; then, and by their means, the epoch comprehends what it loves, what it thinks, what it wishes for; its idea is reduced to a symbol, and with all its power, it then tends to the realization of that which it wishes for and which it loves; and it is inevitable that it should at last arrive at it. It crushes the passions which oppose it, as the rock, torn from the summit of a mountain, crushes the frail shrubs that are on its brow.

Within this limit, the work of the greater part of philosophers is confined. But some among them, a very small number, go forward, and regarding not merely their own epoch and its sentiments, but man himself and the laws of his nature, humanity and its progress since the earliest records of the past, they

obtain glimpses, more or less distinct, beyond the tendencies of their age, of the destiny and the tendencies of humanity. Not merely is the form of truth, beauty and morality, to which their epoch aspires, revealed to their eyes, but truth, beauty and morality, disengaged from all forms, and passing from one to the other without change. But this discovery is without significance and without use to their contemporaries who can comprehend only what is true, beautiful and good for themselves and for their own age.

It is thus that history may find among the most ancient nations and almost in the cradle of humanity, those monuments of wisdom which awaken its astonishment, as it meets with the clear indication of ideas whose discovery seems to belong to a more recent period. But let it not be deceived, nor draw any conclusion from this against the progressive course of humanity. A few philosophers may long since have had glimpses of truth, which have hardly yet begun to be popular, but this does not prove that we are behind antiquity. They were unintelligible to their own epoch; and it needed ages of progress before they could become intelligible to ours.

The absurd forms in which antiquity clothed the sublime truths, which the philosophy of our day claims to have discovered in its religious monuments, prove that if those truths were really comprehended at that epoch by some men of genius and taught to the people, these people, in their infancy, did not understand them; for they turned them into ridiculous stories, compared with which our fairy tales might pass for master-pieces of reason and probability.

We are strongly tempted to fear that our philosophers are under a delusion, and that they gratuitously lend their own light to the priests of the ancient religions. In order to find a profound system of cosmogony in the oriental fables, it appears to us that we must have a great inclination for it; and in spite of every facility which the art of interpretation presents to those ingenious minds, it still happens that the excessive absurdity of the text often confounds their best efforts. It is this which sometimes makes the work of Creutzer, illustrated with such admirable patience by M. Guignault, so completely unintelligible.

Those Germans, who labor with such ardor, to decorate the infancy of humanity with the conquests of its maturity, appear to us, to carry more genius than good sense into all that they undertake.

However this may be, it has always been in the power of reflection to rise above the intelligence of its epoch, and more or less to disengage the truth from its perishable forms. But still time must be allowed for this process. The sages, who at distant intervals have pursued this path unknown to the vulgar, have not all arrived at the same point; the last, taking their start from a more advanced post, have gone to a greater distance; so that even here the progressive march of the human mind may be perceived.

A few poets have had a dim feeling of this truth, of this beauty, of this morality, disengaged from every form. They have celebrated it in hymns, that were sublimely mystical, but no less unintelligible to the great mass, than the object of their enthusiasm itself. The difficulty of this kind of poetry is to discover

forms for the expression of that which has no forms. There are images to represent concrete truth, in all its forms; but there are no images to represent abstract and ideal truth. Hence, mystical poetry, if by good fortune now and then sublime, is by its very nature, always liable to ridicule, except with the initiated.

VII.

THE INFLUENCE OF GREECE IN THE DEVELOPEMENT OF HUMANITY.

1827.

UNDE HUMANITAS, DOCTRINA, RELIGIO, FRUGES, LEGES ORTÆ, ATQUE IN OMNES TERRAS DISTRIBUTÆ. *Cic. pro L. Flacco*, 26.

*** When we contemplate this land bristling with such numerous mountains, these coasts so deeply indented by the sea, these islands, scattered as the advanced guard of the maritime path to Asia, our memory involuntarily calls up the ancient destiny of this corner of the world and the sublime and immortal rank which it has held in the designs of Providence. It was to this spot, that thirty centuries since, the winds and waves bore the germs of civilization from the East. These germs often fructified by the influence of the most delicious climate on the plains of Asia, had been as often plucked up. It was in vain, that majestic rivers, an incomparable soil, and the most benignant sky seemed to combine in inviting the inhabitants of these delightful plains, to the cultivation of the arts, to refinement of manners, to the developement of thought, and to the knowledge of nature and of God. From the mountains of the North and the burning sands of the South, were poured forth, by turns, two savage and rival races of men, who for centuries, in their rapid inundations, swept through this open and defenceless

arena. These inexhaustible races were successively enervated in the delicious garden which they entered; but, barbarous upon its arrival, each conquering tribe began with the work of destruction, and soon attacked by another, it had no time to pass from the effeminacy which softens the soul, to the civilization which exalts it. It was the destiny of the plains of Asia to awaken the instinct of civilization in the heart of man; but the developement of this instinct required a degree of security which they did not present. The first schools of infant humanity were in countries less exposed than this great highway of barbarians. And yet, neither the desert of sand, which separates Egypt from Syria, nor the high battlements of stately Tyre, nor the rampart of the Taurus, which surrounds Asia Minor like a wall, was a sufficient safeguard against the savage agitations of the centre of Asia.

Sooner or later, these three barriers could not but fall before the power of one of those empires, which were alternately established and overthrown by the hands of the barbarians on the banks of the Euphrates. The seeds of civilization required a still more secure asylum. They needed the more remote shelter of the rocks of Greece, and the protection of the ever-rolling seas, in which it was embosomed. Separated from Asia by the Hellespont and the long defiles of Thrace, shielded on the North by the lofty chain of mountains which divides it, with Italy, from the open plains of Northern Europe, surrounded on every other side by water, Greece combines with all these external fortifications, the advantage of an internal construction, resembling a castle of the Middle Ages. Wall is added

to wall, portal to portal, forming an inextricable labyrinth, which always affords a retreat and an asylum for its defenders after every defeat and presents snares and perils to its enemies after every victory. Upon this soil, shone upon by a glorious sun, bathed by romantic seas, adorned to profusion by the wild and picturesque beauties of a luxuriant vegetation, a race of men no less admirably organised was cast by Providence, to be trained and educated for the benefit of humanity; a race endowed with activity and courage, possessing a bold and poetical imagination, loving the mountains and the sea, and consequently, independence and danger; fitted for every thing, for philosophy no less than for business; for the arts no less than for virtue; for the labors of war no less than for those of peace; a race gifted with an extraordinary and unrivalled genius, and the unhappy remains of which we shamefully permit to perish before our eyes. If a people were ever predestined by Heaven to a high and peculiar destiny and were entitled to the name of the people of God, this certainly was the people. It sustained this rank during ten centuries; for during ten centuries, it marched at the head of humanity, opening an immortal path before it; it was preëminent over all who had been chosen before or who have been since; for it was by it and in it, that the root was firmly planted, in the bosom of humanity, of that tree of civilization which is destined at length to cover the earth with its branches.

What days were those of Marathon, of Salamis, of Platæa, in the history of the human race! Hitherto, civilization had yielded in its infancy to the power of

the barbarians. On the shores of the Euphrates and the Tigris, in Syria, in Egypt, on the favored coasts of Asia Minor, at all epochs and in every place, it had proved to be the weakest. In those three days of immortal memory, for the first time, it gained the victory; for the first time, the power of numbers was broken by that of intelligence, and force was made to feel restraint. After the obscurity, in which its infancy had been nurtured, civilization needed a state of independence to attain maturity; and it gained it in the Median war, by the aid of the rocks and waters of Greece. Fructified by the blood of its first defenders, safe from the weapons of the barbarians, the tender tree shot rapidly up, and on all sides renewed the branches which had been swept bare by the storm. While the sap was at work within, during the twenty-seven years of the Peloponnesian war, the insular and Asiatic colonies, the advanced posts of the metropolis, lifted up their heads and flourished under the shadow of its power, which every where now commanded respect. Others grew into strength for the civilization of the West, both on the coasts of Sicily, and on the borders of Italy, where the future heiress of Greece was yet slumbering in the cradle, and where that new centre of light was slowly preparing, which was to call around it so many barbarous nations. The power of the chosen people was thus developed on all sides and gradually fortified. At length, when its education was sufficiently advanced, and in the retreat of the Ten Thousand and under the ensigns of Agesilaus, it had obtained the consciousness of its destiny, Providence concentrated all its forces in the hands of Alexander,

for the fulfilment of its designs. Next to the Median war, the expedition of Alexander is the most important event of which history has preserved the remembrance. The Median war was the means of saving civilization in its cradle; the expedition of Alexander was the first act of its youth. It was the commencement of the long struggle between civilization and barbarism, which is at the foundation of the history of humanity, because it is at the foundation of its destiny.

Previously, civilization had not dared to enter the lists. Happy in the preservation of its life and the enjoyment of its independence, in an obscure corner of the world, it yielded the palm of empire to its rival. At length, it emerged from its retreat, under the standards of Alexander; it planted its foot in the arena which it has never abandoned, and from that time the possession of the earth was disputed. This expedition, moreover, was a new thing in the world. It had none of the characteristics of the barbarian invasions which preceded it. Instead of conquering by force, Alexander conquered by skill; instead of pulling down, he built up; instead of degrading, he enlightened. With the exception of a few societies of priests, who concealed as a mystery the little science which they possessed, Alexander found nothing in his path but an arrogant barbarism; gold, but no virtues; satraps and slaves, but no men.

The superiority of the Grecian race shone forth in every thing which belongs to the soul, to thought; the people were every where elevated in submitting to its yoke. It was less a conquest than a mission; the general had the genius of an apostle and the day after

his victories, the disciple of Aristotle eclipsed the king of Macedonia. Hitherto there had been no world. There was nothing but isolated nations, enemies or strangers to one another, with different endowments, habits and pursuits. Cyrus, like all the barbarians, founded only an empire. The expedition of Alexander, brought into contact, mingled and combined in the same system all the nations of the East. Hence, the ideas of these nations were brought together; they comprehended and modified one another; and gathered around the torch of the Grecian spirit. This intellectual union gave birth to the first civilized world,—the Grecian or Oriental world, from whose bosom proceeded Christianity. Christianity, as philosophy, comprised a popular summary of all the truth which this first world had discovered with regard to the destiny of man. The previous religions, the offspring of the senses and the imagination, were only the religions of children and barbarians. They were all of a date anterior to civilization. Christianity was the first reflective religion, the first religion of men. It was the product, the expression, and the consummation of the first age of civilization, and by reason of this, the principle and the soul of the second.

The immortal rank of Greece in the destinies of humanity was thus fulfilled. From that time, civilization has formed a powerful body on the earth, and one that is henceforth invincible. A daughter of Greece, Rome, then collected under its empire the nations of the West. As this empire increased, it invaded the Oriental world; and this union gave birth to a new world, still more vast, the world of the Mediterranean

shores, the Southern or Roman World. The North and the South thus came into communication with each other, the civilized South and the barbarous North; and a new amalgamation was prepared. When an armful of green fuel is thrown upon a blazing fire, the new supply at first seems to quench it; and torrents of smoke at once succeed the live flame; but soon the moisture is evaporated, the fibres become dry and take fire, the flame bursts forth, and the hearth glows with a purer brightness than before. This is an image of what took place when the savage tribes of the North were made to coalesce with the cultivated inhabitants of the South. An equilibrium was established, if we may so speak, between the barbarism of the one and the civilization of the other; and the result was a new civilization which was shared by both. It was only in this way that the new races could be assimilated to the old and raised to their level.

But barbarism is an inert element; while civilization is an active principle. In their mutual fermentation, then, civilization must gradually absorb barbarism. This chemical operation was slowly carried on during the Middle Ages, and at last gave birth to the third civilized world, the European world, a world superior in vastness to the Roman, as this had been to the Grecian. This third world, itself hardly completed, is already giving birth to a fourth, the American-European world, which extends its arms to Asia by the North and the South, surrounds Africa, takes a station in New Holland, possesses or has its eye upon all the islands of the sea, and which in process of time will become the definitive and total world, the consummate

world, the world of humanity. Such is the immense horizon which civilization has filled with its light, since its morning star arose upon the solitary mountains of Greece. Its early progress was slow and painful. A thousand years must elapse before it could leave its cradle. But it grew in strength as it advanced, and in modern times it has needed but three centuries to gain possession of a world. At the present day, it is a giant without a rival upon the earth; the barbarians flee before its breath; and henceforth it has only conquests to achieve and no serious struggles to maintain. Yet in the midst of its prosperity, what has it done with Greece, the glorious country of its birth? Are we obliged to confess what we have seen for the last six years? Greece, which was the first to vanquish the barbarians, had, for three centuries, been their miserable slave. At length, after having suffered so long, beholding around it civilized nations which it might regard as its children, beholding them crowned with opulence and power, beholding them at peace with one another and with the world, it arose for liberty, with the hope that it would not be abandoned by them, and that having nothing better to do, they would recall the remembrance of Leonidas and Themistocles. But it presumed too far. Engaged in an unequal contest, it was left in solitary despair. Pillaged, burned, sold into slavery, perishing with hunger, it reached forth its hands to us; it begged to be allowed the meanest place among us; it consented to become our servant, our slave. But, for six years, nothing has been able to disturb the apathy of our diplomatists; and the charity of artisans was needed to

supply it with bread for its hunger, with linen for its wounds, and with arms to sell its last sigh more dearly! And yet Greece is in Europe; and yet Europe is Christian; and yet the lifting of a finger would send back into Asia those masters unworthy of Greece. Undoubtedly, kings are ignorant of history; or else, a prompt compassion would have sooner broken the conspiracy of ministers, by which they were restrained. But at length, we have escaped from that shameful indifference. Better counsels have been heard. The force of things,—as it always does,—has triumphed over the intrigues of a moment, and this corner of Europe will be restored to the civilization to which it has given birth.

Providence cannot interrupt the magnificent design which it has been pursuing for four thousand years, through regard for M. de Metternich and the Jesuits, who differ from it in opinion concerning the destinies of the human race. Ought the Hellespont to have ceased to flow, because the imbecile Xerxes cast some ells of chain upon its waves and beat its majestic bosom with his rods?

VIII.

ON THE PRESENT STATE OF HUMANITY.

1826.

Among the nations spread over the surface of the earth, there are no two which exhibit precisely the same state of civilization. The difference between some of them is enormous; and it is even perceptible among those which bear the closest resemblance to one another. Nevertheless, when we look upon the human race, from a slight elevation, we see that it is divided into certain great masses, which, with a few exceptions, comprise all the nations of the earth. It forms, as it were, so many families, each of which has its own banner and a peculiar direction. Within the bosom of these families, there are many inequalities. The nations, which compose them are in different stages of progress, but they all pursue the same path and are impelled by the same movement. Thus, for example, although the civilization of Russia is far from that of France or England, it is still easy to see that the Russians belong to the same system of civilization with the French and English. They are behind us, it is true, but they follow us. They are acted upon by the same ideas, they are guided by the same light, towards a common end, around which they gravitate with us, although at a distance. They are younger children of the same family, pupils less mature of the

same school of civilization. This cannot be said of the Turks, although like the Russians, they are one of the nations of Europe. It is clear that they belong to a different civilization from our own. In spite of the attraction, which we have exercised upon them, since they took up their abode among us, they have never fallen into our paths. We are not separated from them in the same way that we are from the Russians. Russia is the last planet in our system; Turkey in Europe belongs to another system; and it would be no less difficult to bring the Turks within the sphere of our movement, than to prevent it from being followed by the Russians.

If our meaning is understood from these examples, it will be easy to investigate, according to our views, the different systems of civilization, into which the human race is divided. Now, if we pass by the savage tribes, which have not yet been converted to an order of things that can be called civilized, without an abuse of language, and which in a state of barbarism, more or less gross, are scattered here and there upon the face of the earth; if, I say, we pass by this portion of the human race, as being yet strangers to civilization, we shall see that the remainder, with a few exceptions, may be grouped into three great families, namely, the Christian nations, the Mussulman nations, and the Braminic nations. Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Braminism, are the three great schools, the three great systems of civilization, which comprise every thing that is not barbarous on the earth.

The Mussulman school occupies Western Asia, the North and the East of Africa, to an unknown extent.

The Braminic school possesses Eastern Asia, and the large islands which border upon it, towards the East and South. The Christian school embraces Europe and America; it penetrates into Asia by the North and the South; it has colonies every where. The remainder of the human race is savage, or is not taken into the account.

The Christian movement comprehends about two hundred and thirty millions of men; Mohammedanism nearly one hundred and twenty millions; Braminism, in its different sects, two hundred millions. One hundred millions of barbarians compose the surplus of the inhabitants of the earth. These are so scattered and surrounded, that as a portion of humanity, they present no force and exert no influence.

The Mohammedan and the Braminic nations form two families quite as distinct from each other as they are from the Christian nations. Just as within the bosom of the Christian family, the different nations have not all arrived at the same point, and are divided in opinion on many questions; so within the bosom of Mohammedanism and of Braminism, there are found different sects and different degrees of civilization. But as, in spite of the differences of civilization or of opinion, by which they are divided, all the nations of the Christian family are still evidently involved in the same movement of ideas; so, notwithstanding the differences of sects and the varieties of form which they have received from localities and other causes, the Mohammedan and the Braminic nations have among themselves respectively those relations of opinion and of custom, which make them rally under the same

banner and gravitate towards a common form of civilization. There is the same diversity and the same unity between India, China and Japan, as between Spain, France and England. But when we pass from China into France, or from India into Turkey, or from Persia into Spain, we feel that we have come into a new world and have left one system of civilization for another.

There are three systems of civilization which have, in fact, founded these three great families and which divide them so widely; and these three systems of civilization are, in other words, three different religions or philosophies, the Christian, the Mohammedan and the Braminic. We ought not to be surprised at this. A real religion is nothing but a complete solution of the great questions which interest humanity, that is to say, of the destiny of man, of his origin, of his future condition, of his relations to God and to his fellow men. Now, it is by virtue of the opinions which different nations profess on these questions, that they establish a mode of worship, a government, and laws, that they adopt certain manners, habits, and thoughts, that they aspire to a certain order of things, which they regard as the ideal of the True, the Beautiful, the Right and the Good, in this world.

Every real religion, therefore, necessarily involves not only a certain mode of worship, but a certain political organization, a certain civil order, a certain policy and certain manners. In a word, every religion brings forth a complete system of civilization, which bears to it the relation of effect to cause, and which sooner or later must inevitably be realized.

It is because Braminism, Christianity, and Mohammedanism are three religions, complete and truly original in themselves, that the nations which profess them are under three different systems of civilization. Go where you will, in the very bosom of the empire of Mohammedanism, or of Braminism, wherever you find Christians, of whatever sect they may be, and however rude the sect, you will perceive the character of European civilization. Neither climates, nor races, any more than sects can efface this profound difference, although the surface, the form, the color, if I may so speak, are modified by these circumstances. Hayti, peopled with blacks and situate beneath the line, is involved in our system of civilization. The Greek Catholics of Russia, the Protestants of Prussia, the Nestorians of Asia, the Quakers of America, and the Roman Catholics of France, walk in the same path. The reason of this is, that the sects of a religion are not alterations, but developements and perhaps improvements of its principle; they are branches of the same trunk, fed by the same sap, and bearing similar fruits; while distinct religions, on the other hand, like Christianity and Mohammedanism, are different trees covered with blossoms, leaves and fruits of a different nature.

The true and radical difference between savages and civilized nations, consists in the fact, that the former have only crude and vague ideas on the great questions which interest humanity; so that these ideas could not be brought into a sufficiently precise form for the construction of a system. If the wandering life of most savage tribes is an obstacle to the accurate

solution of these questions, since the tranquillity and leisure which always result from a permanent habitation, and its necessary consequence, the culture of the earth, permit more profound and assiduous reflection; we may say also, on the other hand, that the want of these accurate solutions cherishes the wandering and isolated life of savage tribes. If the system were discovered, they must needs adopt a fixed abode, in order to imbody its consequences in an organic form; this system, more powerful than the vague ideas of the neighboring hordes, would bring them within the sphere of its attraction and subjugate them; an increasing amalgamation would be formed and a civilized nation spring into life. Wherever organized nations have been found, as in Mexico or Peru, a precise and methodical system has been found also; wherever, on the contrary, we meet with savage or wandering tribes, we meet, at the same time, with vague ideas concerning God and the destiny of man. The savages of every part of the world with very few exceptions, are still devoted to Fetichism[1] in religion; that is to say, they have not yet discovered the idea of that, of which they have the feeling but not the conception. While the Pelasgians still wandered in their forests, they called their Gods, *Theoi*, but gave them no specific names; that is, they had yet no precise ideas, and were still given to Fetichism. They obtained precise ideas and with them civilization only in the midst of the religious systems that were introduced from Phenicia and Egypt. It is by virtue of the attraction,

[1] See Note G.

which is exercised by a determinate system of solutions to the great human problems, upon those who have none of their own, that we see the savage portion of humanity every day decreasing, and gradually rallying around the most powerful systems of civilized nations. This phenomenon is witnessed in a quite remarkable manner, in America and in Siberia. Hence, the easy success of our missionaries among all truly savage nations, and their small success among civilized nations. They can act on these only by the superior truth of the Christian system. The superiority of truth is also a superiority of force and gives the superiority of attraction. It is by the conquests of Christianity, as it has been well said, that we perceive its superiority of truth; and this superiority of truth is a pledge that it will gain dominion of the world. It is by virtue of the same superiority, that the conquerors of the Roman empire and those of the Chinese empire, have themselves been conquered to the systems of civilization adopted by the people whom they subjugated.

From what has been said, we may regard the world as subject to the attraction of three different forces, or three systems of civilization; Christianity, Braminism, and Mohammedanism. For, as we have just seen, savage nations possess no systems and exercise no attraction; they are the remains of the primitive materials of civilization, and these remains, also, must sooner or later be wrought up; or, what is the same thing, be amalgamated with the civilized masses already formed. This theoretic view is confirmed by fact. The savage race is every day decreasing, and in two modes; first, by the conversion of some tribes

to civilization, and secondly, by the rapid growth of population among civilized nations,—a growth, which, as it does not take place among savages where the population is stationary, must every day add to the comparitive superiority of the one class and the comparative weakness of the other.

If, in any part of the earth, there were a great mass of savage tribes in contact, as there was in the North and in the centre of Asia, during the fourth century, we might admit the possibility, that a system, suddenly appearing in the bosom of this mass, could gather around it the people who composed it, and create a fourth civilization, a fourth centre of attraction. But such a mass does not exist. The savage population in America is divided into isolated parts; in Asia, it is scarcely to be found at all; but is scattered in the islands, and feeble and already under guardianship in New Holland. There would remain then the heart of Africa; but all the North is Mohammedan, as well as the Eastern coast; the Europeans possess stations at the West and South; it is impossible, that these stronger attractions should not destroy, at its birth, every amalgamation which might be attempted in the centre of Africa; not to mention, that the climate and the want of large rivers towards the South lead us to presume, that the population of these unknown regions must be quite inconsiderable. We may then regard these three systems of civilization as the only systems which can exert an influence on the destinies of the world. To these systems, therefore, we must give our attention.

What are their respective forces, the degree of their

vigor and attractive power; and in the struggle in which they are engaged for the monopoly of the world, which will obtain the victory, if indeed the world is to be brought into a single system of civilization? We will, hereafter, confirm a truth, which we have already pointed out, namely, that the truest system is necessarily the strongest, and must finally absorb the others; and we will endeavor to ascertain, by history and examination, which is the truest; but, at this moment, we wish to estimate them merely in an external point of view, by the positions which they occupy, the material forces which they can command, and the acts which display their vigor or their weakness.

Now, it is proved by facts that Christian civilization is the only one of the three, which is endowed, at the present day, with an expansive power. It is, in truth, the only one which makes any progress at the expense of the others, and which gains savage tribes to civilization.

Braminism has few or no savages to civilize; its dominion extends to the Eastern borders of Asia, and on the West, it approaches Mohammedanism, and Christianity; it is, therefore, in contact, with the other systems of civilization. And as it forms no foreign colonies, it remains unknown to the savages of other countries. It will, accordingly, have no share in the mass of men who are yet to be civilized.

Mohammedanism, also, forms no colonies; like Braminism, it keeps at home; the time when it subdued nations with the sword is past. Now, on the East, towards Asia, on the North and on the West, towards Europe, it is arrested by Christian and

Braminic civilization. It comes in contact with savages only at the South, towards the centre of Africa. We know not whether it continues to extend in that direction, or whether the immense conquests, which it formerly made, are still increasing, but we may affirm, with certainty, that if it do continue to make converts among savage tribes, it is the mere result of contact, and not at all of design; for, at the present day, we do not discover in Mohammedanism, the slightest trace of the spirit of proselytism, which it once possessed and which is now so ardently cherished by Christian nations. If a small degree of it only remained, it would long since have traversed Africa; for with what facility, could it not have drawn such rude and scattered nations within its system, if it had been willing to take the trouble. It is enough to contemplate the rapidity with which Christian proselytism has made the conquest of America. Nothing proves more strongly the lifelessness of the Mussulman system, the utter want of expansion, than the persistence in Christianity of the Greeks of Europe, of those Greeks, who have so long been subject, without protection, to the absolute power of that system. Whatever advantage of position Mohammedanism may enjoy in Africa, it makes but very slow progress in that country. But even this progress will be arrested by the appearance of Christianity, which will soon be carried by colonies and by commerce into this unknown continent, and dispute with it, with a far superior energy, for the possession of the savage tribes, which it contains.

If we now turn our eyes to Christianity, we perceive, that with the exception of the barbarians of Africa—

and even these it is on the point of disputing with Mohammedanism—it holds in its hand all the savages of the rest of the world.

In the first place, there is hardly an island of any considerable magnitude where it has not taken a station; others it constantly visits with its ships; and, by degrees, the population of every island of the ocean will fall under its system. By holding the coasts of New Holland, it surrounds with a thread, which they cannot escape from, all the tribes of this fifth world,—tribes the most barbarous which have yet been discovered. It will follow the same course there that it has followed in America. Christian civilization, landing on the shores of America, planted its foot upon the soil, and connected itself with every thing around it, in all directions; then, drawing in this immense chain, it penetrated to the interior, driving towards the centre the savage tribes, until at length, hunted from every quarter and forced into a narrow circle, they surrender the continent. In this way, Christian civilization will conquer New Holland; in this way, it has already conquered three quarters of America, which still presents a numerous population and vast territories for its acquisition. This acquisition will be gained by it in two modes, both of which prove its incontestable superiority. The savages will either be converted and lost in its bosom, or they will surrender to it their soil and retire to the most distant regions. There will be no difficulty in furnishing this soil with population. Civilization has the power of increasing its population in proportion to the extent of its territory,—a power which is not possessed by barbarism. It will thus be

recruited in either case, whether it gains the soil with its inhabitants or nothing but the soil.

We perceive, therefore, that the mass of men, belonging to the system of Christian civilization, already superior to those who belong to the two other systems, has before it a vast prospect of increase, both at the expense of the savage portion of the human race and by virtue of its own productive power. We may add that, in general, the countries occupied by Mohammedanism and by Braminism, have as many inhabitants as comport with those systems of civilization, while this is far from being the case with many of the most important Christian nations. America, throughout its whole extent, is far from containing the population which it is destined to support. Spain has not a third of the inhabitants, which it could maintain on a system like that of France and which it will undoubtedly hereafter adopt. The population of modern Russia is increasing at the rate of six hundred thousand souls annually.

If we now consider the conquests over one another, which are made or should be made by the three systems, we find new proofs of the expansive power, which is possessed exclusively by Christian civilization. Neither Braminism nor Mohammedanism penetrates or attempts to penetrate into Christian possessions. Christianity and its civilization every where advance with ardor, and with deliberate purpose into the domains of Brama and of Mohammed. They openly meditate their conquest. The Bible and Missionary Societies are instituted for this express purpose. But there are two levers of still greater power in operation

to detach ancient Asia from its ancient doctrines. These levers are Russia and England. While the former is preparing, sooner or later, to drive out Mohammedanism from Europe, it stops its progress by the Caucasus, and cuts off, at their source in the deserts of the North, the new supplies for Islamism and Braminism. The condition of Siberia is worthy of remark. This country, comprising a third part of Asia, is overrun, in every sense of the word, by the wandering votaries of Brama,—the remains of those formidable tribes which conquered Asia and Europe. But here and there, in the midst of these herdsmen and hunters, we see a city rise up, like an oasis in the desert. These cities, inhabited by Christian exiles or merchants, exhibit all the civilization, all the arts of Europe. They are surrounded, to a certain distance, by a stationary population devoted to agriculture. The Asiatic herdsmen, attracted by these little centres of civilization, which they frequent for the sake of a market, are charmed by the wonders of our West. Like flies attracted by honey, many of them yield to the enticement; they endeavor to obtain land, on which to settle and gradually learn to despise their former mode of life. These vagrant tribes, which could never fix in one place, since the beginning of the world, are thus brought together and made to share in our movement of civilization. Some German colonies, also, escaping from the throng of Europe and taking refuge in these deserts with their arts and sciences, contribute by the success of their agriculture and their youthful associations to hasten the progress of this movement.

While Russia acts upon Asia on the North, from

the Ural Mountains to the extremity of Kamschatka, and opens a large third of this vast country to our civilization, England invades it by the South and causes our power to penetrate into the very centre of Braminism. An admirable proof of the superiority of Christian civilization is presented by the conduct of Russia and England with regard to the Asiatics. Far from attacking their faith and their customs, they respect them. They have no zeal for proselytism, and for that very reason they will make proselytes. They are satisfied with exhibiting before these people, the spectacle of our religion, of our institutions, of our manners, of our ideas, as if they had divined that great law of the human race, which impels it to adopt what is most beautiful, most elevated and most true. It is, undoubtedly, from motives of prudence and interest, and not from a noble calculation in favor of civilization, that this method has been followed by the two nations. The persecution of Braminism would have driven the English from India; but this prudence, when combined with actual superiority, is the wisest mode of proselytism. The English, it is true, have by no means produced any remarkable change in the religious faith of India; that ancient fortress of Braminism is too well guarded by indolence and ignorance. But one of two things must at length take place; either the faith of India will lose strength before the intelligence of the society of Calcutta, or a European or mixed population, growing up on the banks of the Ganges, will take the place of the old inhabitants, and gradually increasing, will lay the foundations of a New Europe in Asia. In either case, our civilization

will be the gainer; and entering upon Braminism by the South, as Russia surrounds it on the North, it will prepare the way for the fall of that antiquated system.

The conquests of Christian civilization, moreover, will be accelerated by the immense superiority of its power. This superiority is so great, that one of our maritime nations by itself, could annihilate all the fleets of the combined nations of the two other families. We have no less superiority on land. As the Christian population is the most numerous, and the only one which has the prospect of increase, we have a growing superiority, in point of numbers; but in addition to this, wherever our armies have come in contact with those of Braminic or Mussulman nations, we have displayed a far more important superiority than that of numbers, a superiority of skill, of discipline, of arms, of military genius. This superiority has been manifested on the fields of Hindostan, where a handful of English have been seen to vanquish and reduce to terms immense Asiatic armies. It was exhibited in Egypt, in the conflict of the French with the Mamelukes; in Turkey and in Persia, whenever the Russian armies came in contact with the armies of those two empires. This superiority is so great that no intelligent man can doubt, that a Russian, French or English army would be able to conquer a Turkish or Chinese army of three or four times the number; or that four or five vessels commanded by Lord Cochrane and manœuvred by Englishmen would succeed, in a few engagements, in annihilating all the fleets of the Mussulman nations.

We are no less superior in riches, which is the fruit of industry. The perfection of our agriculture, of our arts, of our machinery, gives us the means of paying immense sums to the government, without feeling it, compared with which the imposts of the Mussulman and Braminic nations are nothing. This is because we produce much and at a cheap rate, by which means our wealth is increased and the ability given to devote large sums to public affairs. England has expended sixteen thousand millions within thirty years; her subjects then must have gained this sum, that is, they must have produced its value in order to pay it to their country. Now these sixteen thousand millions are but a small part of their profits; for the duties are but a slight proportion of the income; and so far from the country being impoverished by this gift to the government, it is a great deal richer than before. To what is all this, as well as our superiority in war to be attributed? To our genius in the sciences, to the progress which human intelligence has made and is every day making among us. In fact, all this is the fruit of science. We, moreover, behold science, stationary among the Braminic nations, despised by the Mohammedan, but honored and cultivated among us, advancing with the steps of a giant and gaining strength as it advances. This is the secret of the superiority of our power. This superiority is only an effect, of which superiority of intelligence or of science is the genuine cause. And as our superiority in science is not a matter of accident which may disappear at any moment; as it is evident, on the contrary, that the permanence of our scientific information is increased

with its progress; it is also evident that our superiority in power is not the result of accidental good fortune, but an enduring fact which will be perpetual, which will go onward in a constant and boundless progression. This superiority, therefore, is one of the indestructible characteristics of Christian civilization.

Now this superiority of power is a new circumstance which appears to give it brighter and brighter promise of the conquest of the world.

In the first place, it is clear, that it secures it from all hazard of conquest on the part of the two other civilized families; it renders it invulnerable to all their attacks. In the second place, it puts them, so to speak, at our disposal; and we can hardly avoid wishing to avail ourselves of this faculty; for power is accompanied with an almost invincible craving to exercise and diffuse itself; this craving, which is now expended in intestine wars between Christian nations, must seek and find other aliment, as soon as these nations shall lay aside their hostilities. And sooner or later, this moment will come, because sooner or later, it will appear ridiculous, as well as contrary to their interests, to destroy one another. Just as civilization diminishes the number of civil suits, by increasing the authority of justice, and the weight of enlightened interest, it tends to abolish wars between improved and reasonable nations. We already perceive the dawn of this new epoch, when the European nations will remain at peace, because they are sensible of the loss which they sustain in war, and because no adequate injustice will afford a pretext for it. This force then without employment at home must needs be di-

rected abroad. And although conquest is an injustice in itself, it introduces, when made by a superior civilization, a very great benefit, namely, the civilization of the conquered nation. This has been the fate of America and it will be that of Turkey, after it shall have been conquered by Russia.

II.

We have seen that the human race is divided into two very unequal portions, namely, barbarous tribes and civilized nations. As there is no example of the return of a civilized people to the savage state, while we are taught by history that the greater part of the nations actually civilized were originally barbarous, there can be no doubt, and we have admitted it as an incontestable truth, that the savages, who now exist on the face of the earth are destined to attain civilization.

But the question may be asked whether the savage tribes which actually exist will gather round our present systems of civilization, or whether there is some probability that a new system of civilization will arise, in some quarter, from the bosom of barbarism? In examining this question, we have found that the latter supposition has scarcely any reasons in its favor. The progressive diminution of savage tribes compared with the civilized nations on which they border; the helpless and solitary condition of the one and the power and activity of the other; the absence of any mass of barbarians, sufficiently large and sufficiently remote from the present systems of civilization, for a new system to spring up and develope itself within its bosom;

are all so many grounds for our opinion that the number of systems of civilization is finally settled, and that the remaining savage portion of humanity will be gradually absorbed in those which now exist.

The destiny of the savage portion of humanity is therefore linked with that of the civilized portion. We may regard the individuals, who compose the former as so many recruits to increase the ranks of the latter.

The destiny of humanity therefore appears to depend only on the future condition of the nations, that are actually civilized. In other words, we may regard the nations that are actually civilized as composing of themselves the whole of humanity. When we meditate on the future prospects of these nations, therefore, we meditate on the future prospects of the world.

We have seen that the civilized world, formerly so diversified and unequal, has become far more simple and identical. In fact, notwithstanding the great number of nations, of which it is composed, it will be regarded by those who look upon it from an elevated point of view, who rise above considerations of time and who do not stumble at differences of form, as marching entirely under three banners and in three directions; in other words, humanity, as a whole, is actually divided into three systems of civilization.

Now, one of these three systems, namely, the Christian, has appeared to be exclusively endowed with the expansive power, which is the life of civilization, as vegetation is that of plants. This system alone, in fact, makes any progress; it alone is animated with the twofold zeal of improvement and of proselytism; it alone makes conquests of others; it alone cherishes the

idea of gathering barbarians within its bosom; it alone makes any impression upon them, and no other is found with equal resources for this undertaking. It, therefore, exhibits all the signs of a fresh and vigorous life. The other two, on the contrary, appear smitten with death, and bear the marks of languishment rather than of vitality. They seem to exist merely because time is requisite for a dead system, like a withered tree, to fall to pieces. They make no conquests either among one another or among barbarians; they resist the invasion of the Christian system only by their inertness; in a word, they manifest all the symptoms of decay; for as soon as a doctrine ceases to advance, it declines; its life is over with its conquests.

In fact, therefore, the Christian system is making progress and rapid progress, while the other two are decaying; the nations which compose it are every day becoming more united, and growing into a powerful aggregate which nothing on earth is able to resist. It is impossible for the Christian system to be absorbed in either of the others; on the contrary, it is beginning to absorb them both, or at least, to reduce the territory which they occupy, and there is every reason to believe that these conquests will soon go on with increased rapidity. We cannot then avoid the conclusion, that if the Christian system of civilization be not destroyed by internal defects, it is destined to gain possession of the earth. Its future condition, therefore, involves the future condition of the world.

But, moreover, as Christian civilization appears to lead all the nations of the earth in its movement, a small number of nations appear to command the move-

ment of Christian civilization. These are France, England and Germany. It is indeed, evident, that the other Christian nations aspire after, and will sooner or later attain, the state of intelligence, cultivation and freedom, which is enjoyed by these nations; and that they, in their turn, are pressing forward to an end, which is yet unknown, and which no nation has yet reached. It is by this sign, that we recognise the most advanced nations of the world, those which break the ground and which prepare the way for humanity. All other nations imitate a greater degree of perfection than they find in their own condition, a degree of perfection which they see realized in some more advanced nation. The three nations, which we have designated are the only ones which invent, that is to say, which seek their progress, not in the example of some other nation, more enlightened, more fortunate, and better regulated than themselves, but in the world of ideas and of truth. We do not mean, that these three nations,—to which, in justice, the United States of America should be added,—have not still much to imitate in one another. Of all countries in the world, Germany is the one, in which the sources of instruction are most liberally opened and most judiciously regulated; but it is far from the political advancement of France, of England, and of the United States. England is no less distant from our civil order and our impartiality, while we are behind her in her public spirit, in her industry and in some of her institutions; the three European nations, in fine, can learn a great deal from the United States with respect to economy and tolerance. But if each of these nations finds

something to imitate in the others, the others, in their turn, find something to imitate in that. Each has then arrived, on some points, at the most perfect state it is acquainted with, so that it can make no further advances except by invention. All, therefore, in some particular, are at the head of Christian civilization,—a privilege which is shared with them by no other. For this reason, they are the exemplars of the world, the van-guard of humanity in the march of civilization.

We may observe, moreover, that each of these nations, so to speak, has its peculiar employment in the work of civilization, that is to say, a special faculty in which it excels, and at the same time, without being destitute of others. France is the country, in which ideas are the most advanced; it possesses a prevailing good sense, and a clearness of understanding which make it preëminently the philosophical nation; no other has contributed so much towards enlightening the world; it would even seem that the ideas of other nations cannot become popular, except on the condition of being clarified, set in order and proclaimed by our writers. But we have a less amount of actual knowledge than Germany. That is the learned nation, as we are the philosophical; since it is as much distinguished for patience of intellect as we are for clearness of understanding. It accumulates with a laborious curiosity and embraces with a prodigious memory all the facts presented by history and science; but it is unable to apply them to practical uses, and to the improvement of humanity; it does not know how to draw from them what is general and available, with the justness, the order, the universality and the philosophical acumen,

which characterize the French. In the work of civilization, Germany supplies the raw materials for ideas, we form them into shape, and England applies them to practical concerns. This is her task, and the point in which she excels. Although we are more practical than the Germans, we are less so than the English; in almost every case, they surpass us, when it comes to the application of a discovery or a theory. Among them, ideas are realized as soon as they are conceived; they pass rapidly from books to affairs. The same is true of the Americans, who are of the same race, the same school, and who possess the same genius. Nothing is more natural than these differences. Nations, like individuals, have each their own genius; of course, they will be eminent, each in the department to which its genius is adapted; and as one faculty is never developed but at the expense of the others, it is clear, that the nation which excels in one, must be inferior in the others. For the rest, this diversity of talents is an admirable arrangement. Without knowledge, there can be no sound ideas, and without sound ideas, no skilful and prosperous management of practical affairs. On the other hand, knowledge informs the memory, but does not enlighten the mind; ideas enlighten the mind, but do not contribute to happiness except when they are applied and realized. Ideas are the knowledge of practice, as they are the practice of knowledge. They are therefore at once nearer to practice than knowledge is, and nearer to knowledge than practice is. Hence it follows that the nation, whose dominant faculty is that of ideas must be more practical than that whose faculty is knowledge, and more learned than that

whose faculty is practice. This is precisely what we see. We are more practical than the Germans and more learned than the English. This same nation should at the same time, approach nearer to the harmony of the three faculties than either of the others; for, placed between knowledge which it works into ideas and practice which it enlightens, though less learned than one of its rivals and less practical than the other, it is perhaps superior to both, by a more complete balancing of the two extreme faculties in which it is not eminent, with the intermediate faculty which is peculiarly its own and in which it excels. We may regard it as the pivot of civilization, since, by means of philosophy, it connects knowledge and practice; and in some sense, brings together the learned nation and the practical nation. Finally, as loyal fellow-laborers in the same task, the three nations share with one another the fruits of their labors. England, which is indebted to France for a portion of its ideas, and to Germany for a portion of its knowledge, pays back to them its industry and its prosperity, as France pays back to Germany the ideas which it obtains from its knowledge. So that by this admirable distribution, each has its special task in the production of one of the elements which make up the result, while the result itself belongs exclusively to none, but must be ascribed to all.

Such is the beautiful spectacle which Christian civilization presents to us in the three nations that are at its head. There exists between them an involuntary alliance, truly majestic and holy, for it has for its object the progress of humanity; and it is to these

nations, that Providence seems to have entrusted the destinies of the world.

In truth, the course of the other Christian nations is completely marked out. They will follow the three leading nations to the point at which they have arrived. They have to make up the distance which separates them from it; a few years more and they will be where we are now. It follows from this, that they will proceed as we shall have proceeded; if the path which we are pursuing, and whose issue is concealed from our sight, leads to an abyss, they will fall into it as well as ourselves; for as they have begun like us, adopted our direction and embraced our principles, the same effects will produce the same causes; our fate will be theirs. But if, on the contrary, the destiny, which awaits us, is an ever-growing civilization, a perfection of ideas, of knowledge, of industry, of greatness and of prosperity, they will share with us in this happy futurity; it will be theirs as it will have been ours; and not only theirs, but that of humanity itself, since humanity itself must gather around Christian civilization and in consequence, must share its destiny. Thus, three nations, in the advanced path which they pursue, bear with them the whole race of mankind; and these three nations, in their turn, are governed and conducted, by those select individuals, whose labors and thoughts, whose resolutions and acts determine the destinies of humanity. It is thus that every thing on the earth is simplified by time and the course of events; that after some millions of years, the world at first so confused, so diversified, so unknown, so hostile to itself, is gradually concentrated and organ-

ised, so that the philosopher who speculates on its future prospects, may investigate them completely in those of the dominant civilization, of which Paris, London and Berlin are the centres.

It follows from what has been said that the most momentous question which philosophy can propose is that of the future condition of our civilization. Although they do not know it, it is a household question for all men, a national question for all nations. But what a still more lively and urgent interest does it possess for us, who are the immediate children, the actual citizens of this civilization! We may be deceived in our anticipations; it may be that all the probabilities which lead us to see the whole human race hereafter gathering around the Christian system are mere illusions. We can imagine that this should be supposed, that they who cannot seize the unity which lies beneath the differences presented by the actual spectacle of the world, the necessary elements which are involved in the contingencies manifested by the events of history, and who, filled with a superstitious reverence for the hidden future, dare not bind it, in advance, to the laws of a reason, which will die to-morrow,—we can imagine, that to them our speculations should appear as dreams. But if the destinies of our civilization be not those of the world, it is at least certain that they are our own. Citizens of France, of England, of Germany, and of Europe, we ought to devote ourselves to the service of our country; this is both our interest and our duty. And how shall we serve our country, if we do not comprehend its position? How shall we comprehend that, if we do not

know whence we come or whither we go, if we are ignorant of the chain of causes, by which our present condition has been produced, of those which are now secretly at work, and of the future for which they are preparing the way? And yet, who thinks of proposing these questions to himself? Who is busy with their solution? Let us open our eyes and look around us. In this political ant-hill which is every where in commotion for the attainment of power and the command of our destinies, what insect does not pretend to regulate and of course to understand them? And yet which of these bold competitors has ever taken a year, nay a month, or even a single week to reflect on the subject? Is the science of politics, then, such a simple affair, that it is enough to have arrived at years of discretion in order to comprehend it, or that, by special grace, it reveals itself at once to those who engage in it? There is, undoubtedly, a practical kind of politics, which needs only the light of simple good sense and experience of life. Surrounded with the bonds of society, every one feels in his own village on which side the chain presses him; the humblest peasant can go as far as to the hand of the sub-prefect who draws it, and a little more sagacity will lead to the prefect himself; without being greatly enlightened, twenty individuals in a department can reach the source of the evil, and deliberate on the remedy. But the destiny of a nation no more consists in questions like these, than the destiny of an individual in suitable nourishment, warm clothing and a commodious lodging. They may affect the health of the body politic and tend to increase its force; but health and force

are not ends but means. Has man fulfilled his destiny, when he is in good health? This would not be maintained by the physicians themselves. Has he fulfilled it, when he has made his fortune? In that case, the last days of the rich man would be without an object, as well as the whole life of his children. No, common sense and the catechism protest alike against this doctrine. The end of life is not animal but moral. The body is a frail bark that bears man over the ocean of life; the pilot should save it from rocks, but it is not for the sake of saving it that he sails; else it would be absurd to quit the port. Let us not attribute such an absurdity to Providence, when it is absolved from it by our consciousness. Providence never makes a vicious circle; no more in the lives of nations than of individuals. Neither do nations quit the port merely that they may not perish, they do not come into existence only that they may avoid being lost. They also have their mission to fulfil in the world; and for them also, besides the science which is occupied with the health of the body politic, there is another, which is occupied with its destiny. The former may suffice for the administration of a country, the latter is demanded for its government. But it is precisely this about which our statesmen give themselves no concern. Economists, administrators, jurists, we have in abundance; such men are made in France by the dozen; we have manufactories of them as of physicians; but men of political science, statesmen, we have none; and as our affairs now stand, this is well understood. And how should we have them, when the questions, on the scientific solution of which their formation depends,

are not even proposed, not even suspected by those who sit at the helm; when instead of looking at the horizon, they look at their feet; instead of studying the future condition of the world, and in this the future condition of Europe, and in the future condition of Europe, the mission of their country, they give themselves no trouble on such points and are occupied only with the details of the national administration? For to such a degree of degradation are we sunk in politics, that we do not even comprehend the signification of the word and imagine that we are dealing with politics, when we are employed merely with our internal affairs. Let it not be said that we are guilty of exaggeration. Our statesmen not only imagine this, but act in consequence of it. Do not fear that they will cast a glance on the other side of our frontier. What is beyond is nothing to them. What do they care for Europe, for humanity, for the world? To provide for France, to organize France, to render France prosperous and happy,—is not this the sole object of politics, and consequently the whole of their mission? Thus they go on; and with the portion of the Chambers which agrees with them, they make and unmake the regulations of the equipments and leave the course of the vessel to the mercy of the winds and the good pleasure of God. And hence two results. First, the internal affairs are all wrong; for there is no surer way of destroying the health of a nation, as well as of an individual, than to spend the whole life in thinking about it. Secondly, France no longer acts beyond its own limits, or if it does so, it is by the force of necessity and for some internal end; two cha-

racteristic traits of the policy of this epoch, which will crown it with peculiar honor in history! What would Richelieu say, if he could return and talk for an hour with the ministers of France, in the nineteenth century? We should see the singular spectacle of a statesman of former days, with lessons for the statesmen of the present day; and this, after the lapse of two centuries, two centuries of progress, two centuries of revolutions, two centuries during which humanity has made strides that have so prodigiously enlarged the horizon of politics. For it is a fact, which we ought not to lose sight of, that the advancement of civilization has elevated the mission of the statesman; the information and the ideas which would once have sufficed for a Richelieu, are not sufficient now. The balance of Europe is not now the great question of politics, but the future condition of humanity. The civil wars of Europe are ended. The rivalship of the nations which compose it is about to cease, as the rivalship of the Grecian cities was brought to a close under the dominion of Alexander, and the diversities of the provinces of France, under the unity of the royal dominion. Greece became a single nation under Alexander, and the question which before was between Lacedæmon, Athens, Bœotia and Macedon was now between Greece and Persia. And in like manner, Europe is beginning to be but one nation, since there is an America, an Asia, an Africa. It is the unity of Europe against these masses, and the balance of these masses among themselves, with which a statesman at this day should employ himself. Mr. Canning began to comprehend this; and this is his title to glory, the

thought which procured for him from one end of Europe to the other, the applauses of common sense, which this thought called forth. Great ideas are long brooded over in the mind before they assume a definite shape; it is the man of genius who first presents them in the clear light of day. The minister who shall first discard the narrow ideas of an exclusive patriotism and conduct the policy of his country, not to the worn-out end of its own aggrandisement, and the abasement of its neighbors, but to the advantage of the union of Europe, and of the civilization of the world by the union and the ideas of Europe,—that minister will be the statesman of the nineteenth century, and will secure the glory and the power of his country, precisely because he has abjured the dogma of a selfish patriotism. But again, a minister would possess this idea in vain, if he did not also possess the knowledge to govern according to it, that is to say, if he did not know the course and the destiny of humanity, that is to say once more, if he had not a definite opinion on the law of its developement. It is not enough for the politics of the nineteenth century to know the strength and the weakness of the different nations of Europe; the grand outlines of the geography of the world, the principal masses of men that are sketched on its surface, the invisible element which constitutes each of these masses, the soul which inspires them, the spirit and the ideas which impel them, their material resources, their position, their internal strength, and the effects of all these elements on the future condition of each,—this is the order of facts, which a politician of the present day should contem-

plate and embrace, these should form the basis of all his speculations. Add to this, the history of all these masses, which contains both the revelation of their future condition and that of the future condition of humanity.

In conclusion, we repeat it, we cannot imagine how so many conscientious men plunge into political affairs, and guide the wheel of our destiny in one path or another, I will not say, without having thought of proposing these great questions, but without having given them that profound examination and study which their importance demands. For they must confess that they act blindly in concerns which involve the gravest interests. Would they trust only to the guidance of chance, if they were called to decide upon the happiness or misery, the ruin or the elevation of a single family? And are the interests of their country, of Europe, of humanity, less sacred than those of a family? Is the fact of putting them in jeopardy by carelessness and ignorance less criminal or shameful? I know that the course of humanity is marked out, and that God does not abandon its future condition to the hazard of the weaknesses or the caprices of a few individuals. But what we can neither prevent nor accomplish, we can at least retard or accelerate by our good or bad conduct. Providence is not wise for the sake of absolving men from their duty. Providence governs the world, but in the broad outlines of the destiny which is appointed to it, there is room for human virtue and folly, for the devotion of the hero, and the selfishness of the coward. It is the duty of every good man, who by his position or his talents can act upon

his country, to take part in its affairs; and it is the duty of all who do thus take part, to be well informed as to the manner in which their efforts should be directed. But this cannot be done, except by the means which we have pointed out, that is to say, by investigating the condition and the prospects of the country; and, in order to discover these, by examining the condition of the world and the mission of the country in the destiny of humanity. Such is our political morality. Such is the reason why the question which we have proposed,—a question so majestic for the philosopher, who sees in it the future condition of humanity,—so interesting to the obscure citizen who sees in it that of his country, appears to us of infinite importance for the man who feels conscious of the mission to act upon the affairs of his country and who is resolved to accomplish this mission with dignity and virtue.

We confess, it is particularly as philosophers that we have been led to the examination of this great problem. Persuaded of the truth of the conjectures on the prospects of Christian civilization, which have been suggested by a view of the world, beholding in the destiny of this civilization that of the human race, this interest predominates in our mind, over all others; so much the more, as, so far from excluding, it embraces and comprehends them. We have also been led to this inquiry, by another interest, which belongs more especially to our philosophical studies. It is the wish to call forth a philosophy of history, on a broader scale, than has yet appeared among us. It seems to us, that hitherto, we have given our attention too exclusively to nations, and not enough to humanity; too

much to institutions, religions, and manners, and not enough to the developement of the human mind, which is the secret principle of manners, religions, and institutions. The former method has concealed the progress of civilization itself, of which only isolated fragments are found in the civilization of each nation. For the civilization of one nation is not civilization; civilization itself is the succession of different degrees of civilization; and in order to comprehend its progress, we must understand the origin, the connexion, and the developement of these different degrees. The second method has left in the shade the very principle of civilization, which is something more profound than institutions, than all external facts; for all things of this kind die and succeed each other, while civilization never dies. This principle, which we have illustrated connects together all institutions, all religions, all diversities of manners, all forms of humanity, and reduces them to being merely events in its history. This essentially simplifies the history of humanity, and gives it a physiognomy, a unity and a charm altogether new.

NOTES ON JOUFFROY.

NOTES

TO THE TRANSLATIONS FROM JOUFFROY.

NOTE A. Page 3.

DUGALD STEWART.

This Essay contains the principal portion of M. Jouffroy's Preface to his translation of Dugald Stewart's "Outlines of Moral Philosophy." One or two unimportant passages only, relating to the character of the original work, have been omitted. The following allusion to this translation was made by Mr. Stewart in the Preface to his "Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man," and may be regarded as the dying tribute of that venerable philosopher to his youthful successor. It is dated April 16, 1828, and his own decease took place on June 11 of the same year. "And here I may be pardoned for gratifying a personal feeling, by mentioning the pleasure which I have lately received from a perusal of the very elegant translation by M. Jouffroy of my Outlines of Moral Philosophy, preceded by a long introduction full of original and important matter. This publication, together with the space occupied in the *Fragmens Philosophiques* of M. Cousin by large extracts from the same work, comprising nearly the whole of its

contents, encourages me in the hope, that the volumes I now publish, may perhaps find a few who will not only read but study them with attention (for a cursory perusal is altogether useless), in some other countries as well as my own." [1]

A knowledge of the connexion between Dugald Stewart and the modern French philosophers of the Eclectic School, will justly tend to strengthen the favorable estimation in which the latter writers are already held by the students of philosophy in this country. It is a very encouraging circumstance that the works of so temperate and circumspect a thinker as Mr. Stewart are made the basis of philosophical instruction in many of our higher seminaries. There could hardly be a better preparation for a profound and wisely appreciating acquaintance with the developement of philosophy which has awakened such a general interest in the minds of the most cultivated European scholars, since the commencement of the present century. I cannot but think that both Dugald Stewart and Dr. Reid, as well as another almost forgotten but singularly penetrating and sagacious English philosopher, Dr. Price, will occupy a more elevated rank than they have yet enjoyed among our intellectual benefactors, whenever the earnest study of philosophy shall be revived in our mother country. There is perfect truth in the testimony given to Mr. Stewart's peculiar merits, a few years since, by a writer in the Edinburgh Review, who with too great modesty styles himself "an inquirer in the mere outskirts of the matter," but who presents a more discriminating view of the relation of the Scottish School to the Continental Philosophy than I remember to have seen advanced by any other British writer. "The name of Dugald Stewart is a name venerable to all Europe and to none more dear and venerable than to our-

[1] *Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers of Man.* Vol. I. p. viii. Boston. 1828.

selves. Nevertheless his writings are not a Philosophy, but a making ready for one. He does not enter on the field to till it, he only encompasses it with fences, invites cultivators, and drives away intruders; often (fallen on evil days) he is reduced to long arguments with the passers by, to prove that it *is* a field, that this so highly prized domain of his, is in truth, soil and substance, not clouds and shadow. We regard his discussions on the nature of philosophic language, and his unwearied efforts to set forth and guard against its fallacies as worthy of all acknowledgment; as indeed forming the greatest, perhaps the only true improvement, which Philosophy has received among us in our age. It is only to a superficial observer that the import of these discussions can seem trivial: rightly understood, they give sufficient and final answer to Hartley's and Darwin's, and all other possible forms of Materialism, the grand Idolatry, as we may rightly call it, by which, in all times, the true Worship, that of the Invisible, has been polluted and withstood. Mr. Stewart has written warmly against Kant; but it would surprise him to find how much of a Kantist he himself essentially is. Has not the whole scope of his labors been to reconcile what a Kantist would call his understanding with his reason; a noble, but still too fruitless attempt to overarch the chasm which, for all minds but his own, separates his Science from his Religion? We regard the assiduous study of his Works, as the best preparation for studying those of Kant."[1]

We must find the true continuators of Dugald Stewart, however, in M. Cousin, and particularly in M. Jouffroy, who have unfolded his views by a more perfect analysis, established them on a scientific foundation, verified by a rigorous induction many ideas which he left in the vagueness of conjecture, and at the same time, have enriched his

[1] *Edinburgh Review*, No. XCII. pp. 345, 346. Boston Ed. 1827.

theories with many fruitful applications as well as original discoveries of their own. Indeed, it must be admitted, that the disciples have far surpassed their master, in their luminous and coherent expositions of the laws of the human mind, in the logical exactness of their conclusions, and in their exquisite discrimination of the complicated phenomena of thought and feeling, while they every where exhibit the same masculine good sense, the same purity of moral sentiment, and the same glowing love of humanity which form the characteristic charm of his writings.

As M. Jouffroy is so largely indebted both to Dugald Stewart and to Dr. Reid for his philosophical culture, it seems to be but an act of literary justice, to render back his improvements on their system, or to say the least, his illustrations of their views, to the language in which they had their origin. This has never been attempted to my knowledge; and indeed, if I am correctly informed, the merits of the restorers of a sound philosophy in France have, as yet, been but very inadequately appreciated in Great Britain. With the exception of two individuals,—of those, however, if I may add the remark without presumption, whose judgment is entitled to more respect on this subject, than any writer in the English language, who has recently manifested an interest in philosophical studies,—Sir James Mackintosh[1] and Sir William Hamilton,[2] there is no eminent writer who has alluded to the present intellectual movement in France, in terms that can be deemed in any degree, proportioned to the importance of the subject. I have accordingly ventured to introduce nearly the whole of the Preface to M. Jouffroy's translation of Mr. Stewart's "Outlines" into this volume. Though in point of attractive composition and of philosophical depth, it can-

[1] *View of the Progress of Ethical Philosophy.* p. 36. Note. p. 270. Philadelphia. 1832.

[2] *Edinburgh Review*, No. XCIX.

not be compared with his later writings, I do not hesitate to bespeak for it the attentive consideration of the student. Perhaps too it will suggest little that is absolutely new to those who are familiar with the spirit of the Scottish philosophy. Still I do not know where we are to look for a more intelligent statement of the purposes of mental science and the method in which its cultivation should be carried on. As a wholesome introduction to the study of intellectual philosophy, I know of nothing better in any language, and could the spirit of sober and tranquil investigation which pervades it be transfused into the minds of our students, who are devoted to this subject, it could not fail to give a substance and solidity to the philosophical developement, which our own literature, it may be hoped, is destined to receive, at no very distant day.

NOTE B. Page 85.

IDEOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY.

Neither of the terms *ideology* or *psychology* has been used to any considerable extent in the discussions of English writers on the philosophy of the mind. The former has been almost exclusively appropriated to the speculations of the French School represented by Condillac and Destutt-Tracy. It cannot be pretended that it has either sufficient comprehensiveness or precision to warrant its introduction into the vocabulary of philosophy. The term psychology, on the other hand, has been for some time naturalized in the philosophical literature of the continent of Europe, and seems entitled, both by its regular analogical formation and its specific force, to the place which it occupies. It would give greater clearness to the language of English philosophy, and supersede the use of an awkward circumlocution, if this term were generally adopted by scientific writers.

NOTE C. Page 88.

JOHN LOCKE.

It will not be surprising if many readers shall regard the comparative estimate of Mr. Locke and Dr. Reid, which is here given by M. Jouffroy, as too much in favor of the latter. There is a traditional respect for the philosophical merits of Mr. Locke, connected with a well-founded veneration for his personal character, which awakens a feeling of impatience in some individuals, who, in truth, are far from admitting the results of his speculations, at every attempt to expose the defects of his theories or to call in question his authority. It is not unusual to call him the father of the modern philosophy of the human mind, and to elevate him to the same rank in relation to that science which is held by Bacon as the founder of the true method of investigation in physical science. We even hear his name pronounced in company with those of Milton and Newton, as a consummate specimen of English genius. The "Essay on Human Understanding" is, consequently, regarded in the light of an ultimate code of intellectual legislation, which is to be adhered to with no less rigor than the established law of the land. His opinions are often quoted as authoritative decisions, and though they have long since been set aside by the almost unanimous voice of foreign philosophers, it is yet counted among us a species of presumption to examine their foundation or to doubt of their validity.

It is by no means difficult to account for this prepossession, even in the minds of some of our most enlightened thinkers. Mr. Locke possessed qualities as a writer on abstract subjects, which were rare in his day, and which can never cease to command the admiration of the intelligent reader. His mental courage impelled him to break off many shackles

which had been usually worn. His love of truth was too sincere and earnest to permit his confinement within the limits of a party. His eye turned freely to the light without reference to the point from which it came. He rejected the scholastic forms in which thought had been wretchedly tramelled, and gave free indulgence to the tendencies of his mind, which was inclined by nature to examination and doubt, even on those subjects which had hitherto been deemed too sacred to be looked into. In an age of affectation and false taste, he had purified his mind from every taint of cant, and expressed himself with a manly simplicity, which gives the charm of freshness to his writings, even when there is no originality in his ideas. The transparency of his style is an emblem of the ingenuousness of his disposition and of his clearness of thought. His discussion of difficult and complicated subjects is conducted with such a business-like directness and skill, that we are often tempted to take his conclusions on trust without a careful inquiry into the strength of their foundation. The liberal and elevated views, moreover, which he uniformly cherished, on the most interesting questions relating to politics and society; his hostility to every form of oppression; his generous vindication of the rights of the human mind; his singular freedom from prejudice; and the almost childlike artlessness, with which he expresses his opinions, have contributed to win for him the favorable regards of his readers, and, in many cases, to secure him the reverence which we love to yield to the select lights of the human race.

These circumstances, however, should not blind us to the defects of his philosophy. These are hinted at by M. Jouffroy and are fully and ably pointed out by M. Cousin in his *Cours de Philosophie* as they had been before by Leibnitz in his *Nouveaux Essais*. We may render him perfect justice as an independent thinker and a man of peculiar and admirable personal qualities, without exalting him to a scientific eminence, which in the present state of inquiry

he would be the first to disclaim, and which is far from being warranted by his merits as a philosopher. These have been as greatly exaggerated in modern times as they were underrated during the principal part of his own life. He is not entitled to the reputation of establishing the true method of inquiry in the philosophy of the mind. This had been clearly announced by Descartes to be the method of observation applied to the facts of consciousness, and though he did not give it the requisite universality in practice for the formation of a system, it cannot be said that Mr. Locke, in adopting its principles, was faithful to its spirit or successful in its use. At an early stage of his investigations, he departed from the rigid method of induction and was seduced into the vice of employing a theory for the explanation of facts instead of ascertaining facts which should be adequate to the establishment of a theory. He was guilty of a precipitate generalization from a slight and imperfect induction; and hence, the vagueness of his statements and the numerous inconsistencies in his conclusions, which are fatal to his authority both as an observer and a philosopher. His opinions, moreover, with regard to the foundation of morals and the origin of ideas, are essentially the same, as we have before seen, with those which had been promulgated by Mr. Hobbes, and which had been deemed so injurious to the interests of religion and the welfare of society. The consequences, indeed, which Mr. Locke draws from the premises, which he held in common with Hobbes, are of a different character from those which brought upon the latter so much reproach and hostility. In this respect, it may be said that the man triumphed over the philosopher. His native good sense, which seldom forsook him, and his veneration for religion guarded him against the effects of his theories, but at the expense of his logical consistency. His system of morals was founded on the principle of selfishness, and his theory of the human mind admitted no idea which was not traceable to sensation, or to reflection

on the operation of the understanding, as exercised on the results of sensation. The difficulty of constructing a system of religious faith, or of sustaining the instinctive religious sentiments of the human heart, with premises like these, is sufficiently illustrated by the history of speculation in the last century. It is well known that the skepticism of Hume and the atheism of the French philosophers were avowedly supported on the authority of the principles of Mr. Locke; and it was not until these principles were attacked at their foundation and their fallacy demonstrated by philosophers like Dr. Reid in Scotland, and Jacobi and Kant in Germany, that a scientific refutation was given to the conclusions, which had awakened the alarm of society and threatened to desolate the world.

Since writing the above note, I have met with the following portraiture of Locke and of his philosophy, which is so discriminating and just that I cannot forbear enriching my pages with it, although these volumes will hardly fall into the hands of any who have not already seen it in the original work.

"At a time when John Locke was unknown to the world, the sagacity of Shaftesbury had detected the deep riches of his mind, and selected him for a bosom friend and adviser in the work of legislation for Carolina. Locke was at this time in the midway of life, adorning the clearest understanding with the graces of gentleness, good humor, and beautiful ingenuousness. Of a sunny disposition, he could be choleric without malice, and gay without levity. Like the younger Winthrop, he was a most dutiful son. In dialectics, he was unparalleled, except by his patron. His lucid mind despised the speculations of a twilight philosophy, esteeming the pursuit of truth the first object of life,

and its attainment as the criterion of dignity; and therefore he never sacrificed a conviction to an interest. The ill success of the democratic revolution of England had made him an enemy to popular innovations. He had seen the commons of England incapable of retaining the precious conquest they had made; and being neither a theorist like Milton, nor a tory like Tillotson, he cherished what at that day were called English principles; looking to the aristocracy as the surest adversaries of arbitrary power. He did not, like Sidney, sigh for the good old cause of a republic; nor, like Penn, confide in the instincts of humanity; but regarded the privileges of the nobility as the guaranties of English liberties. Emphatically free from avarice, he could yet, as a political writer, deify liberty under the form of wealth; to him slavery seemed no unrighteous institution; and he defines 'political power to be the right of making laws for regulating and preserving property.' Destitute of enthusiasm of soul, he had no kindling love for ideal excellence. He abhorred the designs, and disbelieved the promises, of democracy; he could sneer at the enthusiasm of Friends. Unlike Penn, he believed it possible to construct the future according to the forms of the past. No voice of God within his soul called him away from the established usages of England; and, as he went forth to lay the foundations of civil government in the wilderness, he bowed his mighty understanding to the persuasive influence of Shaftesbury.

"Locke, like William Penn, was tolerant; both loved freedom; both cherished truth in sincerity. But Locke kindled the torch of liberty at the fires of tradition; Penn at the living light in the soul. Locke sought truth through the senses and the outward world; Penn looked inward to the divine revelations in every mind. Locke compared the soul to a sheet of white paper, just as Hobbes had compared it to a slate, on which time and chance might scrawl their experience; to Penn, the soul was an organ which of

itself instinctively breathes divine harmonies, like those musical instruments which are so curiously and perfectly framed, that, when once set in motion, they of themselves give forth all the melodies designed by the artist that made them. To Locke, 'Conscience is nothing else than our own opinion of our own actions;' to Penn, it is the image of God, and his oracle in the soul. Locke, who was never a father, esteemed 'the duty of parents to preserve their children not to be understood without reward and punishment;' Penn loved his children, with not a thought for the consequences. Locke, who was never married, declares marriage an affair of the senses; Penn reverenced woman as the object of fervent, inward affection, made, not for lust, but for love. In studying the understanding, Locke begins with the sources of knowledge; Penn with an inventory of our intellectual treasures. Locke deduces government from Noah and Adam, rests it upon contract, and announces its end to be the security of property; Penn, far from going back to Adam, or even to Noah, declares that 'there must be a people before a government,' and, deducing the right to institute government from man's moral nature, seeks its fundamental rules in the immutable dictates 'of universal reason,' its end in freedom and happiness. The system of Locke lends itself to contending factions of the most opposite interests and purposes; the doctrine of Fox and Penn, being but the common creed of humanity, forbids division, and insures the highest moral unity. To Locke, happiness is pleasure; things are good and evil only in reference to pleasure and pain; and to 'inquire after the highest good is as absurd as to dispute whether the best relish be in apples, plums, or nuts;' Penn esteemed happiness to lie in the subjection of the baser instincts to the instinct of Deity in the breast, good and evil to be eternally and always as unlike as truth and falsehood, and the inquiry after the highest good to involve the purpose of existence. Locke says plainly, that, but for rewards and punishments beyond

the grave, 'it is *certainly right* to eat and drink, and enjoy what we delight in.' Penn, like Plato and Fenelon, maintained the doctrine so terrible to despots, that God is to be loved for his own sake, and virtue to be practised for its intrinsic loveliness. Locke derives the idea of infinity from the senses, describes it as purely negative, and attributes it to nothing but space, duration, and number; Penn derived the idea from the soul, and ascribed it to truth, and virtue, and God. Locke declares immortality a matter with which reason has nothing to do, and that revealed truth must be sustained by outward signs and visible acts of power; Penn saw truth by its own light, and summoned the soul to bear witness to its own glory. Locke believed 'not so many men in wrong opinions as is commonly supposed, because the greatest part have no opinions at all, and do not know what they contend for.' Penn likewise vindicated the many, but it was because truth is the common inheritance of the race. Locke, in his love of tolerance, inveighed against the methods of persecution as 'Popish practices;' Penn censured no sect, but condemned bigotry of all sorts as inhuman." [1]

NOTE D. PAGE 91.

WRITINGS OF COUSIN AND ROYER-COLLARD.

THIS Preface was written before M. Cousin had become generally known as a philosophical writer. We believe that at this time he had published nothing but the valuable contributions to the *Journal des Savans* and the *Archives Philosophiques* which were soon after collected into the volume entitled *Fragmens Philosophiques*, from which copious selections have been given in the first volume of this work. The

[1] BANCROFT'S *History of the United States*, Vol. II. pp. 144, 379.

Lectures here alluded to have never made their appearance, with the exception of the *Programmes* of the courses for 1817 and 1818, which are contained in the volume of Fragments just named. The three volumes, on the "History of Philosophy,"—of two of which we have American translations—belong to a subsequent period in M. Cousin's philosophical career.

M. Royer-Collard, we believe, has never published any thing on philosophical subjects in his own name, with the exception of the "Introductory Discourse" at the commencement of his Lectures in 1813. A very interesting summary of his Lectures, however, prepared from the manuscripts of the author, is given by M. Jouffroy in his translation of the Works of Dr. Reid. They are accompanied with an able introduction by the Editor, and may properly be recommended to the student of intellectual philosophy as an indispensable aid to an acquaintance with the progress of the science in France since the year 1810.

NOTE E. Page 93.

FRENCH TRANSLATIONS OF THE SCOTTISH PHILOSOPHY.

The French philosophers, certainly, cannot be complained of for want of interest in the writers of other nations. They have not only studied their works faithfully but have made translations of many of the best of them—particularly of the Scottish School—into their own language. It is several years since the first volume of Dugald Stewart's "Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind," was translated into French by M. Prevost of Geneva, and the second volume, by M. Farcy; his "Philosophical Essays," have since been translated by M. Huret, his "Dissertation on the Progress of Metaphysical, Ethical and Political Philosophy," by M. Buchon, and his "Philosophy of the Active and Moral Powers

of Man," by MM. Simon and Huret. The translation of the Works of Dr. Reid, by M. Jouffroy himself, alluded to in the preceding note, has recently been completed. It is interesting to observe here as in many other cases, that the introduction of the writings of distinguished foreign authors was connected with an original and important intellectual movement at home.

NOTE F. Page 156.

REPRODUCTION OF HISTORICAL CHARACTERS.

"It is not from identity of opinions, or from similarity of events and outward actions, that a real resemblance in the outward character can be deduced. On the contrary, men of great and strong powers, who are destined to mould the age in which they are born, must first mould themselves upon it. Mahomet, born twelve centuries later, and in the heart of Europe, would not have been a false Prophet, nor would a false Prophet of the present generation have been a Mahomet in the sixth century. I have myself, therefore, derived the deepest interest from the comparison of men, whose characters at the first view appear widely dissimilar, who yet have produced similar effects on their different ages, and this by the exertion of powers which on examination will be found far more alike, than the altered drapery and costume would have led us to suspect. Of the heirs of fame few are more respected by me, though for very different qualities than Erasmus and Luther; scarcely any one has a larger share of my aversion than Voltaire; and even of the better-hearted Rousseau I was never more than a very lukewarm admirer. *** Yet when I abstract the questions of evil and good, and measure only the effects produced and the mode of producing them, I have repeatedly found the idea of Voltaire, Rousseau, Robespierre, recall in

a similar cluster and connexion that of Erasmus, Luther and Munster." COLERIDGE's *Friend*, Vol. I. pp. 217, 218. London. 1818.

The parallel between Erasmus and Voltaire, Luther and Rousseau is continued by Mr. Coleridge in the succeeding pages, and forms one of the most characteristic passages of his prose writings.

NOTE G. PAGE 200.

FETICHISM.

THIS word has recently been introduced into discussions on the history and philosophy of religion. It is of Portuguese origin, being derived either from the word *fetiço* or *fetisso*, a piece of wood used in magic, or any instrument of magic, in general; or from *faticeira*, a female magician. It is sometimes used in a broad sense, to denote the worship of any specific object, whether natural or artificial, animate or inanimate, and thus includes every species of idolatry. Its ordinary signification, however, is more limited, expressing only the worship of a lifeless object, a block, a stone, a nail, a club, or a feather, taken as a Deity.

See DE BROSSES *Du Culte des Dieux Fétiches*, Paris, 1760, by which work, the term was first brought into general use.

See also KRUG's *Allgemeines Handwörterbuch der philosophischen Wissenschaften*, Band II. p. 26. Leipsic, 1833.

The Same. *System der praktischen Philosophie. Dritter Theil, Religionslehre*, p. 66. Note. Königsberg, 1819.

BENJAMIN CONSTANT.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTICE.

The name of Benjamin Constant is so intimately associated with the great political events of his time, that we usually think of him as the strenuous and fearless advocate of constitutional freedom, rather than as a scholar, engaged in the most elaborate and profound researches, and a writer of singular originality and masterly skill, on subjects which address only the higher instincts of the soul.

It is in the latter character, however, that we apprehend he will be most favorably known to posterity. His services as a politician, though uniformly consecrated to the defence of popular rights and the prostration of hereditary abuses, will be comparatively lost sight of, in the changes of society and the progress of affairs, while his investigations in the field of abstract truth and the clear light which he has shed on many questions of paramount importance to the hopes and the happiness of man, will constantly meet with a more correct appreciation and a wider sympathy.

Various as were the pursuits of Benjamin Constant, large as was the compass of action and thought, in

which he has gained a brilliant reputation and bestowed durable benefits upon his race, his character as a writer presents an example of consummate unity, that is no less rare than it is attractive. He was always the same man, always possessed with the same dominant ideas, always devoted to the same interests, always looking to the same objects, whether in the sphere of politics, of elegant literature, of historical investigation or of philosophical discussion. His opinions, of course, like those of every honest and thinking man, were not unfrequently modified; his views on some points, indeed, underwent a thorough revolution; and the practical measures, which he supported may not in every case have the appearance of perfect consistency; but still, we find the same distinct and strongly marked impression of individuality under all circumstances; we recognise in every change of costume or of position, the same peculiar mental endowments and tendencies, which were brought to our notice upon our first acquaintance with the man.

This identity may be resolved into the relation which he sustained to the excited and destructive spirit of his age. He was keenly susceptible to its influence, but was never overcome by its power. He rejoiced in the demolition of every ancient prejudice; his taste and his reason were alike offended by the abuses inflicted on the present by the tyranny of the past; he had no tolerance for hallowed absurdities or venerated errors; he cherished a true and cordial sympathy with the men who began to vindicate their long neglected rights, though it brought perplexity to monarchs and terror to nations; but still he could

never be satisfied with any merely negative results; he could take no pleasure in the work of destruction as such; he wished to overthrow falsehood only for the sake of establishing truth; and in the midst of the ruin, which a revolutionary age had brought over the institutions of society and the opinions of men, he could not rest contented, until the materials were gathered for the reconstruction of a better edifice, upon a broader and firmer foundation than before. Hence he was never exclusively devoted to the interests of a party. He could not bind down his free thoughts to the opinions of any sect or corporation. He was unwilling to make his own ideas the gauge of another man's intellect; or to be measured himself by any arbitrary standard which might be proposed. He valued truth above all things, and independence as the condition of obtaining truth. Accordingly, he could not be made the victim of any of the partial and limited tendencies of the day. He refused to be shackled by devotion to the favorite theories or projects which were every where springing up. The realization of his principles was deemed by him to be of greater consequence than the success of his plans. We therefore find that though acting with others, he always acted out himself; though a lover of sympathy, he never courted it, at the expense of his convictions. Fearful of unwise extremes,—in consequence of the soundness of his mind, and never of paltry timidity,—he exercised a healing, reconciling influence over the conflicting views, which came within his province. He accordingly holds an eminent rank among those who may be honored as the true mediators of society.

"I have always endeavored," he tells us, "to speak out my whole thought, on all the subjects, to which I have directed my attention. Perhaps I shall give equal offence in what I have said concerning religion, to devotees and to infidels, at least, to those who embrace infidelity as a systematic dogma; in what concerns the history of our troubles, to the well-disposed admirers of Robespierre and Saint-Just, and to the enemies of Malesherbes and La Fayette; in what is connected with the Empire, to the enthusiastic partisans of Napoleon and to his detracters. Perhaps my aversion to the rigorous precepts which have so long fettered the progress of our literature, will bring upon me the hostility of those who assert that imitation is necessary, because they cannot attain originality. But these things do not move me. He who has no purpose but that of comprehending the great crisis, which has been approaching for the last two centuries, and which has now manifested itself for forty years, he who wishes only to forward the movement which is bringing the whole human race into a better sphere of ideas and institutions,—he can and should speak out whatever is in his mind."[1]

Benjamin Constant was qualified to a remarkable degree for this independent course, by the circumstances of his birth and education, no less than by the natural bent of his genius and the force of his convictions. This is the idea which serves to explain the identity of his character, and to unfold the exact nature of his position and influence.

[1] *Mélanges de Littérature et de Politique.* Preface, p. VII. Paris, 1829.

Descended from ancestors, who had removed from France to French Switzerland, about the commencement of the seventeenth century, he was born at Lausanne in 1767; and thus a genuine Frenchman by natural descent, by language, by early association, and by the influences which surrounded his childhood, he soon learned to regard himself as a citizen of the nation, in whose affairs he was subsequently to take such an active and efficient interest. It was a fortunate circumstance that his first impressions were received in Protestant Switzerland. They would serve, as we may suppose, to prevent him from yielding to the shallow and frivolous spirit which prevailed, to so great an extent, at that time in the metropolis of France. His early education was received at a German Seminary; and for a considerable time, he was attached to the service of the Duke of Brunswick. In this situation, he acquired the taste for German literature, which he afterwards cultivated with uncommon success, and which exerted a salutary influence on the formation of his character and habits of thought. We perceive the effects of his familiarity with the literature of Germany throughout the whole of his subsequent career. It gave a depth to his conceptions and a vigor to his reasonings, which combined with the charming graces of French expression and the native fire and brilliancy of his wit, produced a style of composition which few continental prose writers have equalled and which none have surpassed.

He had not yet attained the age of thirty years, when he presented himself at Paris, in the midst of the Revolution; and soon gained signal distinction by

the commanding powers of his intellect, the energy of his discourse, and the burning zeal with which he espoused what he deemed the cause of humanity, and the inborn rights of the soul. His political course from that time is familiar to all who are in any degree acquainted with the public movements which agitated the commencement of the present century; and which were brought to a temporary crisis immediately before his decease, which by a remarkable coincidence took place in 1830, a short time after the Revolution of July. By that Revolution, the great constitutional principles to which his life had been devoted, were supposed to have gained an illustrious triumph; he survived to witness their victory; and as if his mission were completed, and there were nothing further left for him to do, he departed from the world. He had lived long enough to stamp a true image of himself upon his age; and he went away to that unseen state of being, in whose reality he had learned to cherish a heart-felt faith.

The history of Benjamin Constant, as a literary man, exhibits the reconciling tendency which has been pointed out, as the peculiar characteristic of his mind. Born at a period when the literature of France was at the summit of its glory and seemed to fill the eye of the world, he was not seduced into the unqualified admiration which was claimed for it as its due; but was impressed, from the beginning, with the pure and lofty promise of a more substantial literature which was just rising from an opposite quarter of the heavens. He had been accustomed to look up to Bayle,

Voltaire and Montesquieu, as the masters of his mind; but he was not so strongly bound by the spell of their names, as to be indifferent to the new and glorious manifestations of thought which were bursting forth from such men as Lessing and Herder, Wieland and Göthe, though beyond the Rhine.

His mode of thinking accordingly betrays nothing of the polished but cold exclusiveness which characterized the fastidious literature of France, during the latter part of the last century. He perceived that the violation of dainty forms is oft-times more than atoned for, by the fresh and gushing life which breaks through them; and that a strict observance of conventional canons is easily made the refuge of imitators and the shield of stupidity. He would not withhold his sympathy from the spirit of beauty, though appearing in an unauthorized shape; and hence refused to worship the reigning idols of the public taste. He scorned to narrow his mind to the petty limits of artificial restrictions; and thus was enabled to enrich the literature, to which he might have been denounced as a traitor. After leaving, for a season, the path which was prescribed by the prevailing taste of the day, he returned from his wanderings through a land of fragrant wild-flowers, with noble offerings for his native shrine. We perceive from the earliest display of his powers, a broader foundation of logical strength, a higher degree of robust action, and a more daring boldness of expression in his style, than had hitherto been usually exhibited by the most popular writers. These characteristics gained vigor and harmony, as his experience ripened and his sphere of action was enlarged. As he

was led, at a subsequent period of his life, to reside for different intervals in Germany, we find the increasing effect of his familiarity with the kindling literature of that country, in the new paths of speculation and inquiry which he struck out, and the fulness and variety of learning which he brought to the illustration of all topics, on which erudition was required.

At the same time that he refused to acknowledge the canons of taste, by which thought was then restrained in the reigning fashion of French Literature, he cultivated a true classical purity of expression, free from the affectation of foreign combinations, presenting no trace of the imitation of favorite authors, clothing unwonted thoughts in the genuine forms of the mother tongue, and though imbodying the most profound ideas, transparent as the day. His native clearness of mind, his inborn sense of the Beautiful and the True, and his sharp logical acuteness, prevented him from falling into the obscurity and extravagance which are usually found in the first growth of a strong and luxuriant literature, and no less in the writings of those who are so enamored of its freshness and bloom, as to lose their self-subsistence and waste the very pith of life in foolish imitations. If he sometimes approaches by the exceeding fineness of his views and the airy subtilty of his distinctions, to the confines of Teutonic mysticism, he is soon drawn back by the precision of French taste and the balanced action of his own mind, to the regions of day-light and common sense. He thus presents a beautiful example of the healthful influence of one literature upon another. Combining the pointedness and rapid movement of the French writers, with

the depth and solidity of the German, he exhibits the excellent effects of discarding the precise formulas of a pedantic school and indulging the mind with the freest and most varied culture, which it can gain. His wit is not unfrequently no less salient and biting than that of Voltaire, while his reverence for all that is truly venerable, his sympathy with the higher feelings and holier aspirations of our nature, indicate the spiritual and religious direction, which he was compelled by the force of light, the supremacy of thought, to adopt as the only natural and just path for a being like man.

The influence of Benjamin Constant was combined with that of August Wilhelm Schlegel and Madame de Staël to promote a better understanding between the literary men of France and Germany; and to reveal the treasures of the latter country to the students and thinkers of the former. His own translation of Schiller's Wallenstein was made with the view of adapting it for representation on the French stage; and hence, it is easy to conceive that it must have failed of doing any thing like justice to the magnificent original. Of its merits or defects, however, I am unable to speak from personal knowledge. It is alluded to in terms of disparagement by the most competent English authority, that I am acquainted with,[1] who appears to intimate that ill-success could not but be the fate of such an undertaking. Benjamin Constant himself acknowledges in a singularly candid criticism on his own production, that many of the objections which had been

[1] *Life of Schiller.* [By Thomas Carlyle], p. 231. London, 1825.

brought against it were perfectly just, and that by a too strict adherence to the rules of the French theatre, he destroyed much of its dramatic effect. But however this may be, it served to awaken attention to the masters of German poetry and to increase the general interest in a literature which has since done so much for the refreshment of France. Among the miscellaneous writings of Benjamin Constant we find the critical essay on this drama, to which I have just alluded.[1] It presents an accurate delineation of its chief characteristics, and a true conception of its spirit, while it breathes a warm sympathy with its fine moral portraitures. The description of Thecla is scarcely surpassed by any thing that I know of in modern French prose; and I cannot but regard the whole piece as an admirable specimen of discriminating, philosophical criticism. Its concluding passage is so expressive a summary of the literary principles of the author, that I will close my remarks on that topic with introducing it here. "It is incontestable that our writers ought to throw off the yoke of superannuated rules in their new dramatic system. They need only take care that the changes be not too frequent or too abrupt. There may be some unavoidable inconveniences; but these, in literature, as in politics, will not be of long duration. Wherever liberty exists, reason will not delay to assume the sovereignty. Stationary spirits cry out in vain that innovations will corrupt the public taste; but the public taste is not thus corrupted; it approves that which is in accordance with truth and nature; it rejects that

[1] *Mélanges de Littérature et de Politique*, pp. 255—321.

which perverts the truth and which deviates from nature by extravagance and exaggeration. The many possess an admirable instinct. This instinct has already traced, in our political emergencies, the limits necessary to reconcile order and liberty; it is laboring with success to place religion, in the position which belongs to it, between incredulity and fanaticism; and the same instinct will exercise its influence on literature and restrain our writers without hampering them."

The career of Benjamin Constant as a political writer and a public debater, presents a cheering example of devotion to principle and of faith in humanity. He cherished an equal love for liberty and for order; and while no man was less wedded to the prescriptive usages of the past, no man was more averse to violent and uncalled for innovations. His favorite ideas led him to believe in the perpetual progress of human affairs; but he had no romantic desire to expedite it, by tampering with the beneficent laws of nature and Providence. Such was his confidence in the force of enlightened opinion, that he trusted solely to the diffusion of truth for the advancement of man; and was no less opposed to the restless enthusiasm which would hurry the march of events, than to the apathy and timorousness which would check it.

He was called, as we have seen, at an early age, to take an active part in the convulsive movements of his day. The idea of the equality of human rights was congenial with his nature. His whole soul was imbued with the hatred of oppression, with the love of freedom, and with sympathy with man. These sentiments were

not quenched by his attachment to literature or his intimacy with learned men. Like the youthful Milton, "he thought it base that he should be travelling at his ease, even for the improvement of his mind abroad, while his fellow citizens were fighting for their liberty at home." Hence he sided with the Revolutionary movement, strong in faith that it was the necessary condition of human progress, and would terminate in unspeakable good. The excesses into which the advocates of freedom subsequently fell were abhorred by none more deeply than by himself; he regarded them as a foul stain on the cause which was nearest the heart of our race, and adapted to betray and injure the interests of humanity; but they never tempted him to renounce his confidence in the principles of liberty, or his high faith in the capacity of man for progress, and his destiny to complete enfranchisement. While he deplored, in bitterness and shame, the atrocities which were committed in the name of humanity, he had too much logical skill, too keen a perception of the springs of action in society, to ascribe these abuses to the principles, for which they claimed to be perpetrated, rather than to the brutal degradation of the people, the dissoluteness of public manners, and the almost total disruption of every moral and religious tie, which had been caused by ages of despotic government, and the flagrant wrongs which had been inflicted, in consequence, on the nature of man. Still, he could not but be anxious that the character of these excesses should be held up in its true light, to the detestation of society and as a warning to posterity. The first breathing time that was gained from the bloody

strife found him faithful to his convictions. He did not fail to utter the voice of stern rebuke, as soon as the hoarse sounds of the tempest began to die away. In a piece first published in 1797, and reprinted with some alterations in 1829, he gives a full and instructive testimony, with regard to the crimes that had been called forth under the pretext of liberty. "The frightful *régime*," says he, "which has been called the reign of terror, did not contribute to the safety of France; France has been saved in spite of this *régime*. It created the greater portion of the obstacles, which it is supposed to have destroyed; and those which it did not create, would have been surmounted in a more speedy as well as a more durable manner, by a government of justice.

"It is to the horrible abuse of power which was then exercised, that we must ascribe the repugnance which some good men now cherish towards all principles, which do not lead to silence and repose in the arms of despotism. The frenzy of 1794 has caused feeble minds to abjure the light of 1789. This abominable *régime* did not, as has been pretended, prepare the people for liberty; it prepared them only to submit to whatever yoke should be presented; it bent their necks to new oppressors, by degrading their minds and drying up their hearts; it served, as an instrument, while it endured, to the friends of anarchy, and its remembrance now serves as an instrument to the friends of slavery and of the abasement of the human race. To justify the *régime* of 1793, to hold up madness and crime as a necessity to which the people are doomed, whenever they attempt to be free, is a greater injury

to a holy cause, than the attacks of its most implacable enemies. It is in this way, that discredit and hostility are brought on all those ideas, which were once cherished with enthusiasm by the most generous minds and transmitted by them to the common mass. I must here add another thought without fear of malicious interpretations. The true republicans were neither the founders, nor the agents of this *régime*. They fought against it, from the moment that they beheld its appearance. They summoned to their aid all those whom the most urgent motives, the interests of their fortune, of their repose, of their life, should have impelled to unite with them. But foolish resentments, a cowardly selfishness, a stupid desire to be revenged on their conquerors, even by means of assassins, prevented this union. The republicans were deserted and they fell; the enemies of Robespierre, not his accomplices; the martyrs of social order, not its destroyers. The reign of terror commenced with their defeat; and was established upon their tombs." [1]

With his ardent attachment to liberal principles of government, Benjamin Constant was no friend to the extravagant sentiments which are sometimes put forth by a portion of their advocates. He wished to limit the powers of government within the most narrow sphere, that is consistent with the public security; so that the greatest possible freedom might be guarantied to individual opinion, enterprise and industry. But he did not think, with Godwin, that government was an evil, necessary in the present state of things, but one

[1] *Mélanges*, p. 343.

day to be dispensed with. The authority of just and equal laws, in his opinion, was no less essential in society, than in physical nature; and their harmonious action, the eternal condition of human improvement and happiness. While he wished for no more law than was necessary to maintain the mutual rights of the community; he would have the covenant of society sacredly observed, crowned with the sanctity of justice and the attractions of benevolence. The essence of his political faith was comprised in the two principles, that the purpose of government is the equal protection of society, and the purpose of society, the freedom and improvement of the individual. By these principles, he was disposed to test all public institutions, rather than by any reference to temporary expediency or empirical rules. "As soon as government departs from this sphere, it becomes an evil, an incalculable evil; but it is not then as government but as usurpation that it is an evil. No doubt, whenever it vexes the innocent, for the sake of punishing the guilty; whenever it encroaches on liberty, under the pretext of guarding against crime; whenever it arrogates to itself a multiplicity of functions which do not belong to it, and undertakes to give laws to the mind, as a moralist, an arbiter of opinion, a guardian of ideas, a director of intellectual progress, it becomes pernicious in the highest degree. But we repeat it, this is not in its capacity as government. It then becomes a simple force, which may be seized upon by a single individual; and which would be no more legitimate, if it were shared among many, or even divided among all." [1]

[1] *Mélanges*, p. 216.

We have already seen that the devotion of Benjamin Constant to public affairs was combined with an earnest zeal for the happiness of individuals. In this respect, he was singularly free from the common infirmity of politicians, which leads them to look at every object either in the relation which it bears to the operations of government, or to party successes. By the infelicity of their position, they are often compelled to lose sight of the end, in the contemplation of the means, to think only of policy, while they forget humanity. While defending in theory the cardinal principles, that all government is for the good of society, and all society, for the good of the individual, they neglect to apply them as the practical test of social arrangements. But so far as society fails of promoting the highest individual good, it fails of its only legitimate end. The excellence of every institution must be judged of by its tendency to quicken and mature the germs of excellence in the great mass of individuals. The culture of a man is an ultimate end; the extension of commerce or the improvement of a machine, a subordinate means. Revolutions are not for the sake of dethroning kings, but of exalting men; not to strip off the glories of the past, but to throw a new glory around the future; not to prostrate the palace, but to bring light and sanctity within every human dwelling. Coming short of this, in their immediate or remote results, they are a wanton mischief. These views were often set forth by Benjamin Constant; and always with the force and eloquence of strong conviction. They were never absent from his thoughts; they seem almost to have made a part of the very texture of his being. The

stormy agitations in which a great portion of his life was passed, were never sufficient to shake his faith that the progress of individual freedom and excellence, as well as the elevation of society in general, is guarantied by the everlasting laws of a beneficent Providence. He looked forward to gradual changes, successive ameliorations in the institutions of society, until all its members should be in a condition to unfold their nature, to enjoy the free and symmetrical action of all their powers, to feel the holiest kindlings of humanity in communion with God and their own souls, and thus to present those forms of consummate manhood, which the voice of ages has prophesied to the world. It was his belief, that human nature contains the elements of a progress like this; and that the essential condition of their developement is the greatest personal freedom, compatible with the security of the whole.

Hence, the enlightened zeal with which he always defended the principles of liberty, not for the sake of completeness in theory or of license in practice, but as the only foundation for individual excellence. "For forty years," says he, "I have maintained the same principle,—freedom in every thing, in religion, in philosophy, in literature, in industry, in politics; and by freedom, I understand the triumph of individuality, as well over the authority which aspires to govern by despotism, as over the masses which claim the right of subjecting the minority to the will of the majority. Despotism has no right whatever. The majority has that of compelling the minority to respect public order; and that is all; but every thing which does not inter-

fere with order, every thing which belongs to the inward nature of man, like opinion; every thing, which in the manifestation of opinion, does not injure another, either by provoking physical violence, or by opposing a contrary manifestation; every thing, which in regard to industry, permits the free exercise of rival industry,—is individual and cannot legitimately be subjected to the power of society." [1]

In his views of the condition to which society is now tending, we perceive the same cheerful trust in his principles, which enabled him to anticipate the dawn of a better day, even in the darkest night of the Revolution. He was fully aware of the character of the crisis in which we live. He considered it not as the last but almost as the first, in a series of changes, which were to be brought about by the resistless force of things, which man could do little either to retard or to hasten, but for which he should prepare. The present ameliorations are to be followed by others. But these ulterior enfranchisements are reserved for a future epoch. We cannot anticipate the march of time; we can only strive to comprehend the advances that have been already made. "In respect to government, the most absolute equality of rights, as they are shared among the collective individuals of the nation, ought to be and soon will be, in all civilized countries, the first condition of the existence of all government. They who possess these rights will be authorized to contribute to their defence, that is to say, to participate in some form or other, in the creation of the laws

[1] *Mélanges*, Preface, p. vi.

which determine the action of the government. In respect to political economy, there will be regard and protection for property, since property is a legal convention, essential at this epoch; but the disposition, the division, the circulation of property will have no restriction, no shackles, because the unlimited freedom of preserving, alienating, changing, or parcelling out property, in our present social state, is the inherent right, the essential want of all who possess it. All kinds of property will be equally sacred in the eye of the law; but each will hold the rank and enjoy the influence assigned to it by the nature of things. There will be, moreover, in relation to industry, freedom, coöperation, the absence of all interference on the part of government, either to preserve individuals from their own errors (which must be enlightened by experience), or to secure to the public the best articles of consumption (since here also the choice must be governed by experience); and every monopoly, every privilege, every corporation protected to the detriment of individual enterprise and activity, will disappear without remedy. In respect to opinions and ideas, government will preserve the most perfect neutrality, for, as it is composed of men of the same nature with the governed, it can no more claim infallibility of opinion, or certainty of ideas, than they. Such, in my opinion, is the social state, to which the human race is advancing. To arrive at this state, is the need and will consequently be the destiny of the present epoch. The wish to remain on this side of it would be unwise; to go beyond it, would be premature." [1]

[1] *Ibid*, p. viii.

The interest with which Benjamin Constant engaged in literature and politics, did not have the effect of seducing his mind from still higher subjects of research and contemplation. He devoted many of the best years of his life to inquiries connected with religion, and had not entirely brought the fruits of his labors before the public, when he was removed by death. His position as a religious writer furnishes a striking illustration of the view that has been presented of his character in the preceding portion of this notice. It was the result of the conflict in which he found the subject of religion so deeply involved upon his entrance on the scene of active life. He arrived at it by slow and painful degrees; after toilsome investigations and frequent revisions of thought; in opposition to the prevailing tendencies of his day, and in obedience only to the strong convictions of his own intellect. Familiar with the skeptical theories which in the early part of his life it was almost deemed a point of good manners to adopt; alive to the force of the evidence which had been brought against the popular conceptions of religion; and hostile to the tyranny and barbarism with which they had been connected, he found that those theories themselves were no less untenable than the abuses which they combated, and that the foundation of religion was deeply laid in the nature of man. He was accordingly led to occupy a position between the traditional errors which infidelity attacked, and the no less portentous errors which it endeavored to introduce in their place.

Surrounded with all the systems of the present and the past, in the midst of the warring ideas which agi-

tated society, of the ancient dogmatism which proscribed the faintest utterance of doubt and of the overwhelming skepticism which poured contempt on the most venerable and cherished convictions of man, he remained independent of every party, desirous only of ascertaining the truth, and doing justice to human nature. He sought to resolve the question whether there was any thing in the nature of man which corresponded to the word religion that is found in all languages, among every people. He inquired whether it was possible to discover the nature of this principle, in its most simple elements, and thus to arrive at the origin of different religious systems. He wished to investigate whether this principle was permanent or transitory, whether it was essentially involved in the various forms of human belief, and whether it was the actual foundation of the institutions, to which the name religious has been given, or the mere pretext for their establishment.[1]

At the commencement of his literary career, religion had been attacked with no inconsiderable success by some of the most brilliant writers in France, and the prevailing tendency of thought was to the denial of all ideas but those which are founded on the testimony of the senses. A faith in the reality of our spiritual nature was ridiculed as an ancient superstition, and inconsistent with the discoveries of modern research. The elevated religious philosophy of Descartes, Malebranche and Fénélon, was undoubtedly exposed to attack, on account of the defects and extravagances

[1] See *Polythéisme Romain*, Introduction par J. MATTER.

with which it was combined ; but instead of removing its errors, with a delicate and cautious hand, the leaders of political opinion rudely set it aside, as unworthy of a place, in the improvements which they were attempting to introduce. The philosophy of Locke, which pursued to its logical consequences undermines the foundation of religion, had been warmly embraced by Voltaire ; and proclaimed by him in the saloons of fashion, with eloquence and wit, if not with force of argument, soon laid the foundation for the shallow Materialism which so long exerted a disastrous influence on the mind of the whole French nation.

It was natural that a man like Benjamin Constant, of quick perceptions and lively susceptibility, should have been led away by the general current of opinion and feeling. It was almost a matter of course to deny the reality of religious sentiments, and no easy task to gain a point of view in which their truth should again be manifested. His mind, however, was not made to endure the burden of doubt. He was unable to part with the holiest faith of man, without looking closely at what he received in return. He was thus led to go through a process, of which many thinking minds in the nineteenth century have had experience, leading from dogmatism to skepticism, and from skepticism to an enlightened faith. The purest religious character is often formed in this way. The clearest light of faith arises upon the mind after it has been tossed and riven by the storms of doubt. It was needful to submit the soul to a searching of this nature, in order to distinguish the traditional from the actual, the essence of religion from its casual form, the spirit of truth from the letter

which clothed it. The mind thus freed from the weight of uncongenial dogmatic notions, raised above the darkness of skepticism which is no less chilling than perplexing, awakes to the consciousness of a higher life; comprehends the mystery of its spiritual nature; accepts with mingled reverence and joy its vast and solemn relations with the universe; and in the exercise of an assured and cheering faith, devotes itself to the service of humanity, with an energy and love that no allurement can seduce from the chosen path, and no threats of danger or fear of evil can in any wise intimidate.

Such, in some respects, was the experience of Benjamin Constant. It is not maintained that he ever arrived at that deep mental repose, which united with the truest mental action, is the crown of the successful pursuit of truth, and of the endeavor to bring all our faculties into harmony with nature. This perhaps could not have been expected, to its full extent, under circumstances like his. But the position to which he was led was that in which alone a true peace of mind can usually be attained by those who have been acted on by the influences of the age in which we live. It is by returning to the everlasting light which burns clearly in the soul that we can be preserved from the false glare of sophistry and the dim and starless night of a lifeless dogmatism.

The change which Benjamin Constant passed through from skepticism to faith seems to have been the fruit of extensive studies, no less than of the revival of the natural human instincts. It appears that his great work on Religion was commenced with a

very different purpose from that to which it is actually devoted. He originally intended it as a contribution to infidelity. He supposed that he should be able to show by an appeal to history, that the religious sentiment in man was always the product of a delusive superstition. It was his design to trace out this element in all its manifestations, in all its influences, in all its disguises, in order to prove that it was pernicious to society and at war with human progress. He found, however, upon a more thorough investigation, that this view was incapable of being maintained. The very researches in which he had engaged to demonstrate the hollowness of religion led him to suspect that it was a universal and indestructible principle in the nature of man. From that moment, he was forced to regard it in a different light. The whole course of his inquiries took another direction, and their final result was the production of a work, which is justly deemed one of the most remarkable testimonies to the truth of religion, which is to be found among the writings of the present day.

An extract from a letter written by Benjamin Constant, at this stage of his inquiries, has recently been published by Chateaubriand, and gives us a glimpse of his state of mind, that is equally interesting in itself and as a commentary on the formation of his opinions. This letter is dated at Hardenberg, in Germany, 11th October, 1811, and was addressed to an intimate friend. "I have continued to labor as well as I could in the midst of so many sad ideas. For the first time, I shall see as I hope, in a few days my History of Religion completely brought into order. I have changed the

whole plan of it, and rewritten more than three quarters of the chapters. This was necessary, to succeed in the order which I had in my mind and which I trust I have attained; it was necessary, moreover, because, as you are aware, I am no longer that intrepid philosopher, who is certain that there is nothing after the present life, and so well satisfied with this world, as to rejoice that there is no other. My work is a singular proof of the remark of Bacon, that a little philosophy leads a man to atheism, but a great deal to religion. It is positively in the profound investigation of facts, in my researches in every quarter, and in struggling with the difficulties without number which they bring against incredulity, that I have found myself forced to return to religious ideas. I have done this most certainly in perfect good faith; for I have not taken a single retrograde step without cost. Even to this moment, all my habits, all my remembrances are on the side of the skeptical philosophy: and I defend, post after post, every spot of ground which religion gains from me. I am even called upon to sacrifice my self-love; for it is not easy, I am sure, to find a logic more compactly linked together, than that which I have made use of to attack every opinion of this kind. My book had only the fault of defending the opposite side to that which I now regard as true and good; and would have succeeded without any manner of doubt, in that portion which is incontestable. I might have had even still greater success, for with very slight changes, I could have made of it what just now is most popular with all; a system of atheism for men of the world, a manifesto against

priests; and the whole combined with the avowal that certain fables are necessary for the people,—an avowal which would satisfy at once both vanity and power." [1]

This degrading course, however, could present no temptation, even for a moment, to a man of a frank and honorable mind. The convictions which Benjamin Constant thus obtained were never attempted to be concealed or disguised. He uttered them, on every fitting occasion, with earnestness and strength; always with boldness, never in the spirit of a partisan; ever presenting them in broad day-light, but never forcing them on the minds of others; so confident of their truth himself, that he could afford to use the utmost mildness and courtesy in their defence. His writings on religion do not contain a passage, that I know of, in which he undertakes to convert the infidel by denunciation, or to enlighten the bigot by a sneer. With his singular gift of satirical eloquence, his power of uttering those sharp words which sting to the quick wherever they touch, when he approaches the subject of religion, he seems awed by the solemnity of his task; and expresses himself with that calm eloquence, which is the strongest test of sincerity, and the surest way to the heart. A rapid sketch of his religious system will form an appropriate close to the present notice.

The foundation of it is laid in the reality of a higher order of sentiments in the nature of man, than was recognised by the selfish philosophy of the Materialists.

[1] Chateaubriand, *Études ou Discours Historiques*. Œuvres. Tom I. p. 258, Paris, 1836.

The tendency of this philosophy is to make man merely the most skilful, the most cunning, the most sagacious of animals. It is in vain that he is elevated to the head of this material organization; he still remains beneath the lowest form of moral nature. But as every being has its specific laws, which constitute its nature, make it what it is, determine its destiny; so man has his peculiar laws, which separate him from the animals, give him his distinguishing characteristics, decide his present condition and his future destiny. One of the most remarkable laws, which are impressed upon the nature of man, is the religious sentiment. This grows out of the deepest elements of his being, constitutes a fundamental law of his nature, and is manifested in some form or other, in every period of his history. The most savage hordes, the most barbarous tribes, nations at the very summit of the social state as well as those in the decline of civilization,—all experience the force of this indestructible sentiment. It triumphs over all other interests. It exercises authority over the wildest passions. It is connected with our deepest cravings, our most vital wants. Its universal influence cannot be denied, though it be maintained that it is an error. This has been asserted from time to time. It has been ascribed to fear, to ignorance, to authority and to fraud. But always without success. It is impossible that accidental and temporary causes should have changed the inward and permanent nature of man, and given him another nature of which he cannot divest himself, even when the causes in question have ceased to exist. It is in vain that his knowledge is

enlarged, that he learns to explain the physical laws of the world, by the regular connexion of cause and effect, without the intervention of beings whom he importunes in his worship or propitiates by his prayers. The teachings of experience may banish religion from a certain sphere, but they cannot expel it from the heart of man. In the midst of his successes and triumphs, neither the universe which he has subdued, the social organizations which he has established, the laws which he has proclaimed, the wants which he has satisfied, nor the means of pleasure which he has gathered around him, are sufficient for the inward cravings of his nature. A desire awakes within his bosom and incessantly calls for something purer, more holy, more elevated. He has exhausted the resources presented by visible nature and his soul aspires to an unseen and illimitable sphere. He has engaged in interests of the most elaborate and complicated character. He has gone through the circle of knowledge, estimated every object of desire, experienced every source of enjoyment; until he has grown weary with exclusive devotion to interest and pleasure and longs for something better. A voice cries out from the bottom of his heart which tells him that all these things are only more or less ingenious mechanism, which can never satisfy the wants of his soul, that what he has taken for ends are only a series of means.

This deep sense of want is intimately connected with the religious sentiment. We feel an indistinct desire for something better than we have yet known; the religious sentiment presents us something better. We are impatient of the limits which restrain our

activity; the religious sentiment announces the time when we shall be free from these limits; we are wearied with the turmoils of life, which, never calmed, resemble each other so closely, as to make at once satiety inevitable and repose impossible; the religious sentiment brings before us the idea of an ineffable repose without the least mixture of satiety. In a word, the religious sentiment is the response to that cry of the soul which nothing can silence, to that yearning after the Infinite, which nothing can suppress. This description may be considered vague and obscure; but how can that be defined with precision, which assumes a different shape in every individual, in every country, in every state of society? In placing the religious sentiment in the same class with our purest and most profound emotions, it is not intended to call in question the reality of its revelations or its hopes. We cannot deny the solidity of its foundation without supposing a singular inconsistency in human nature, which would be at variance with all its endowments. Nothing appears to exist in vain. Every manifestation indicates a cause, every cause produces an effect. Our bodies are destined to perish. They accordingly contain the germs of destruction. These germs, combated for some time by the vital principle, at length triumph. Shall not the tendency, which has been described and which is perhaps determined by a germ of immortality, triumph also?

But if the religious sentiment be an essential principle of human nature, how are we to account for the opposition which it has sometimes received? Shall we call in question the motives of those who have

exercised it? Shall we accuse them of ignorance? Shall we charge them with presumption, or a desire to reject a doctrine, which as it is the support of virtue, has no terrors but for vice? This would be manifestly unjust. At many different epochs, such persons have been the most enlightened, the most cultivated, the most estimable men of their day. Among their ranks have been found generous asserters of liberty, irreproachable citizens, philosophers devoted to the pursuit of truth, fearless and ardent enemies of every oppressive and arbitrary power. The greater part of them, devoted to assiduous meditation, have been preserved from the corrupting temptations of the world, by the delights of studious retirement and the exercise of reflection and thought. By what singular perversion of ideas, has religion become the object of their repugnance and hostility?

It is on account of the perversion which religion itself has been made to suffer. Man has been pursued even into this last asylum, this hidden sanctuary of his existence. Persecution provokes revolt. The display of authority against any opinion whatever, calls forth the most brave and generous spirits in support of that opinion. There is a principle in our souls which spurns all intellectual restraint. This principle can be excited even to fury; it may become the cause of many crimes; but still it is connected with what is most noble and elevated in our nature.

Hence, in all ages, when men have vindicated their mental independence, the resistance to religion which appeared directed against the holiest affections, has in fact been applied to the most oppressive of tyrannies.

By placing force on the side of faith, its defenders have placed courage on the side of doubt. "I have often been struck," says Benjamin Constant, "with a sense of terror and amazement in reading the celebrated *System of Nature*. This long-continued rage of an old man for closing before him every prospect of the future, this inexplicable thirst for destruction, this enthusiasm against a delightful and consoling idea, appeared to me a strange delirium; but I soon accounted for it to myself, when I remembered that authority had lent to this idea a violent and factitious support; and from a sort of repugnance to the writer, who brought annihilation before me with triumph as the ultimate end of myself, and of the objects of my affection, I passed to something like esteem for the bold antagonist of an arrogant authority." But the reign of intolerance, he maintains, has gone for ever. Whatever efforts a narrow and antiquated policy may make to restore it in some of the countries of aged Europe, it will never show its face again. It is incompatible with the civilization of the present day. With the dominion of intolerance, the irritation which has been caused by oppression, must also come to an end. Incredulity has thus lost its principal charm, that of danger. There is no longer any attraction, where there is no peril.

The present is then a favorable time for examining the subject of religion without partiality and without hatred. It should be judged as a fact, of which the reality cannot be contested, and of which it is important to ascertain the nature and the successive modifications. This requires a profound and extensive investigation, the reach of which has hardly been sus-

pected. Although much has been written on the subject, the principal question remains almost untouched. A country may for a long time be the theatre of war, and yet remain unknown to the troops who pass through it. They see only battle-fields in the plains, stations in the mountains, and defiles in the valleys. It is only in time of peace that the country can be examined for the country itself. Such has been the fate of religion. This vast region has been attacked and defended with equal tenacity and violence, but has been visited by no disinterested traveller, for the sake of giving a faithful description of it.

Admitting then the reality of the religious sentiment, as an essential element in the nature of man, it is important to view it in distinction from every form in which it has been clothed, by abstracting every thing which varies, according to relative degrees of improvement, and collecting all that continues the same in the most different circumstances and relations. This distinction is one of great consequence in the system of Benjamin Constant, and furnishes the key to many problems which have hitherto remained without solution.

The religious sentiment grows out of the want that man feels of communication with invisible powers. The form grows out of the want that he also feels of giving permanence and regularity to the means of communication which he believes he has discovered. Hence results at every epoch the establishment of a positive form, adapted to the condition of that epoch. But every positive form, however satisfactory it may be for the present, contains the germ of opposition to

future progress. It acquires, by the very effect of its duration, a dogmatic and stationary character which refuses to follow intelligence in its discoveries. The religious sentiment then separates from this form, which has become, as it were, petrified; and demands another by which it shall not be wounded, and gives itself no rest until it has found it. This is the history of religion; and this fact explains a multitude of phenomena which are presented to our view in the annals of different nations. It shows us why incredulity is infallibly exhibited, with a growing boldness, where a religious form is established, as soon as civilization is carried to a certain degree of elevation. This cannot be accounted for by the ascendancy of certain individuals, who all of a sudden, nobody knows why, are pleased to attack the foundation of certain venerated dogmas. This would be mistaking the effect for the cause, the symptom for the malady. Writers are only the organs of dominant opinions. Their success depends on their accordance with these opinions and their fidelity in expressing them. There are certain epochs in which it is impossible to disseminate doubt; there are others in which it is impossible to restore conviction. Had Voltaire been born in the age of Louis XI. he would not have attempted to weaken the faith of his contemporaries. The reason of this is plain. It is because intelligence has advanced, while the form remains the same; hence the latter, is in some sense, nothing but a deception. The religious sentiment struggles against this deception. But it meets with persecution for its audacity. The effects of persecution are always the same. It increases the evil which it undertakes

to cure. The desire of breaking the yoke of a form which now shows itself oppressive and annoying becomes the sole object of labor and thought. The activity of imagination and the subtilty of reasoning turn against what was once plausible to the reason and attractive to the imagination; in a word, the religious sentiment separates from its form. Persecution then increases. This occasions a sort of fanaticism for incredulity in the rebellious spirits, which seizes and maddens the enlightened classes of society, and soon attacks the religious sentiment itself. It has been crushed for a long time by the material form; and it now meets with still more hostility in the combat between incredulity and religion. As revolutions against despotism are usually followed by a season of anarchy, the overthrow of popular convictions is accompanied with a hatred and contempt for all religious ideas.

Such is a general outline of the system of Benjamin Constant, in relation to the two leading ideas on which it is founded, namely, the reality of the religious sentiment in the nature of man, and the essential distinction of this sentiment from the various forms in which it is clothed.

His opinions with regard to some of the most interesting points of religious faith may be expressed in a few words.

The mutability of religious forms, he contends, does not lead to the denial of the revelation which serves as the basis for the faith of every civilized nation in Europe. It does not imply that a specific form cannot be presented in a supernatural manner, when it is received, or that it cannot be set aside, in the same

manner, when it is discarded. This indeed is in strict accordance with the literal sense of the sacred writings. The Jewish Law was a divine law, presented to the Hebrews by the Supreme Power which instructed them, and accepted by the religious sentiment of the nation. Still this law was good only for a time; it was succeeded by a new law, that is, the ancient form was set aside by its author, the religious sentiment was invited and authorized to detach itself from it, and a new form was substituted in its place. To assert that the germ of religion is found in the heart of man, is certainly not to assign a merely human origin to that gift of Heaven. The infinite Being has deposited this germ in our breast, in order to prepare us for the truths which we are destined to know. This view is sustained by the authority of Paul, who tells us that God had left the nations, to a certain time, to seek him in their own way. The deeper is our conviction that religion has been revealed to us in a supernatural manner, the more readily should we admit that we possess within us the faculty for receiving those divine communications. It is this faculty which we call the religious sentiment. It is to this that all divine revelation is addressed. Without this we should be as incapable of receiving light from Heaven, as is the blind man of receiving light from the sun. "We think therefore," concludes Benjamin Constant, "that the dominant idea of our system is by no means adapted to weaken the foundation of Christianity, at least, as it is understood by Protestantism which we profess, and which we have the legal right of preferring to all other Christian communions."

Of all the forms which the religious sentiment can assume, Christianity is at once the purest and the most satisfactory. As it was taught by its Divine Author, it alleviates all the sorrows of the soul; it respects the freedom of the intellect, while it rescues it from the anguish of doubt; and in every human dwelling, it offers the consolations of the most refined and expansive sympathy, to all who are in need. Unalterable, and at the same time flexible, it engraves the essential truths of religion on the heart, while it receives from every age, the tribute of improvement and progress, which it presents. Let no religious scruples be offended, because the progress of Christianity is spoken of. It is true that in its moral doctrine, in its precepts, in every thing that emanated from its Author, Christianity is not progressive, for it is perfect; but in its external forms, and especially in the exclusive opinions which different sects have adopted, there is ample room for improvement. This is demonstrated by experience. Even the most ardent defenders of Catholicism, they whose express mission seemed to be the maintenance of its dogmas in all their rigor, have unconsciously passed over their limits. They reject those stern and rigid maxims of their ancestors, against which our more enlightened reason and our more humane manners have long protested. The progress of Christianity therefore is certain, in the sense, that it casts off the additions with which it was disfigured less than a century ago; and even in the midst of the retrograde movement which the devotees of the past wish to impress on the human race, men of all opinions follow,—freely or by force, whether

they know it or not, by policy or by conviction,—the new path into which they are brought by the unceasing and resistless influence of time.

In regard to the Jewish religion, Benjamin Constant declares that he cannot agree with the writers of the eighteenth century, who have treated the Old Testament in the most superficial manner, and deemed it worthy only of their hatred and contempt. The merriment of Voltaire at the expense of Ezekiel and the Book of Genesis, can be enjoyed only on the two conditions which make his gaiety so sad, namely, the most profound ignorance and the most deplorable frivolity.

If we admit divine revelations, that is to say, direct and supernatural manifestations of the Deity to man, we must consider these revelations as aids imparted by a good and powerful Being to his weak and ignorant children, when their own resources are insufficient for their improvement in this world. A star flashes across the darkness through which the uncertain traveller is seeking his path. But the end of man is improvement. He cannot advance except by his own efforts, by the exercise of his faculties, by the energy of his free will. If he is under the protection of a wise and beneficent Power, this Power must limit its protection to the revelation of truths proportioned to his intelligence. These manifestations enlighten without shackling him, they leave him free to make use of them on his own responsibility; he can abuse and even renounce them. The combat which takes place in him between good and evil, his errors, even his crimes, prove nothing against the revelation which has been

vouchsafed to him. These are only a part of the struggle to which he is appointed; and this struggle is the means of his improvement. If he were led to this end by a power which subjugated his will, he would lose the character of a free being; and reduced to the rank of a machine, his perfection would be only mechanical. His progress would involve no moral element. The Deity entrusts man with truth which he is to defend, preserve and increase; this is the mission of his intelligence. But in giving him this mission, he does not change his nature. He leaves this what it was before, imperfect, subject to error, liable to make use of improper, defective, nay, even criminal means.

These principles may throw light on the revelation of Moses. We see it arise in a country devoted to the grossest superstitions, in the bosom of a tribe regarded as unclean, and even more ignorant than the rest of the people. Now Theism is incompatible with such a degree of ignorance. How then could Moses be in advance of his age? It has been attempted to refer his Theism to Egypt. It has been thought that he composed his religion out of the secret doctrines of the sacerdotal order of that country. But this opinion appears to be altogether erroneous. Those doctrines bore little resemblance to the simple unity of God as declared by Moses. They were immeasurably inferior to it. "I declare this, therefore," continues Benjamin Constant, "with the stronger conviction, inasmuch as my opinion has been very slowly formed and as it were in spite of myself. The appearance and the character of the Jewish Theism at a time and

among a people, equally incapable of conceiving the idea and of preserving it when presented, are phenomena to my mind which cannot be explained by the common principles of reasoning. If that which I call revelation, divine teaching, light proceeding from the wisdom and goodness of God, be called by others an inward sentiment, the developement of a germ implanted in the human soul, it is of little consequence."

But in the case of Moses, that which is called revelation consists only in the knowledge of the unity of God and of the religious sanction given by this One God to the duties and obligations of man. Thus instructed with regard to the great truth which is one day to transform the human race into a family of brothers, Moses adopted such means for its preservation as seemed to him best; these means were not free from the character of the barbarous age in which little respect was paid to human life; they were modified by the disproportion between his own light and that of his contemporaries; they were thus doomed to a violent struggle, which was the cause of excessive rigor in a portion of his institutions; but all these things belong to a sphere that is merely human, and have no connexion with revelation. Now great confusion has existed in relation to this point. The spirit of sect, has maintained not only that the doctrine of Moses concerning the Supreme Being was revealed from a divine source, but that the writings of the Hebrews, even in their outward arrangement and composition were also divine. The facts related by Moses and the writers who succeeded him have been judged not as historical facts, and according to the rules of

morality which are the primary revelation; but they have been regarded as acts of the divine will, and demanding approbation, though in other circumstances they could not but be condemned. This error on one side has produced a corresponding error on the other. Our philosophers, though often enlightened men and lovers of truth, at least until provoked by opposition, have put their impartiality to a trial which it ill-sustained, and relating horrible events from the Jewish annals, have made them the subject of their declamation and mockery; while these attacks have called forth apologies founded on a principle equally false, and too often defending cruelty and crime.

The distinction which has been pointed out would have saved unbelievers much cold and peurile raillery; and the advocates of religion many contradictions under the weight of which they have always combated in vain. "We do not certainly," says Benjamin Constant, "recognise a divine revelation in the massacre of enemies, in the burning of cities, in the slaying of infants in the arms of their mothers. We see in these bloody monuments of a barbarous epoch, at first, the necessity which imposed rigid laws upon a conqueror, —laws which can perhaps be excused, but which cannot be praised; and afterwards the jealous and inexorable spirit of the sacerdotal order. We recognise the revelation made to Moses, in that portion of Hebrew Scriptures in which all the virtues are recommended, filial love, conjugal love, hospitality towards strangers, chastity, friendship,—which no other legislation elevates to the rank of virtues,—justice, and even pity,—though the epoch of pity had not yet

come, for that epoch is Christianity. Here is the divine voice. Here is the manifestation of Heaven on earth. It is to this alone that we can yield our homage without deceiving ourselves, for it responds to every sentiment of our nature, ennobles and purifies the affections, anticipates the progress of intelligence, and inspires the soul, in the midst of barbarism, with those truths which reason would not have discovered till long afterwards."

In the above sketch of Benjamin Constant's religious system, I have aimed only at presenting a faithful account of his views, without vouching for their correctness. With this sketch and the translations that are given from his *Mélanges*, the reader will be able to form an adequate idea of their character and importance. Those pieces contain the germs of the leading thoughts presented in his great works *De la Religion* and *Polythéisme Romain*, as well as the outline of his theory concerning the progress of society and the improvement of man.

The great merit of Benjamin Constant's system is the prominence which it gives to the religious sentiment as an element of human nature. It is an earnest and eloquent protest against the infidelity of his day, which not only called in question the truth of positive religions, but attacked the foundation of all religion as a delusive superstition. It vindicates with forcible argument and copious historical proofs, the existence of those instincts of the soul, which impel man to the worship of a Higher Power, and inspire him with the hope of a future life. In this respect, it meets the pre-

vailing evil of the times, by which it was suggested. It triumphs over the selfish and material principles which deny man the possession of any essential attributes superior to those of the lower animals. This, however, does not complete the work required for the true vindication of religion. It is not enough to show the reality of the religious instincts of human nature; but their claims must be verified and established by the authority of reason. If the foundation of religion be laid merely in the sensibility, it rests upon an insecure and imperfect basis. It is not traced, in that case, to the deepest elements in the nature of man. Sentiment alone cannot legitimate its universal and everlasting validity. The authority of sentiment itself needs to be confirmed by the decision of reason, the ultimate arbiter of truth. At this point, therefore, we are left by the system of Benjamin Constant, and if we would show the absolute, authoritative, uncompromising claims of religion to supremacy over the nature of man, we must have recourse to the principles of a more profound philosophy,—principles, which if I mistake not, have been established in the preceding parts of this work. If it can be demonstrated that the sentiment of religion reposes on the eternal ideas of reason, its influence over our whole nature is sanctioned and confirmed; it is redeemed from the character of a temporary or enthusiastic feeling; it is removed from the sphere of the imagination to that of our severest convictions; and we yield our understandings and our hearts to its dominion with the same peaceful assurance, with which we act on the results of demonstrative science.

In presenting Benjamin Constant in company with Cousin and Jouffroy, I trust, I shall not be understood to claim for him the philosophical eminence, which has been attained by the latter individuals. They are true philosophers, while Benjamin Constant, it must be confessed, is only an amateur in philosophy. The principal unity which exists between them is that of opposition to the old French School of infidel philosophy, faith in the progress of humanity, and attachment to freedom of thought and expression.

I ought, perhaps, also to add, in order to avoid misapprehension, that the view which I have given of Benjamin Constant, has no reference to his private, personal character, but is intended to apply only to the principles which he exhibits in his more important writings. Whether he realized himself the ideal which he sets before his readers, is a question which I have not felt called upon to discuss.

The work from which these translations are made is the *Mélanges de Littérature et de Politique*, to which I have repeatedly referred in this notice.

I.

THE PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPEMENT OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS.

If we consider religion as a fixed and immutable thing, which must be the same at every epoch of civilization, we start from a principle which cannot but lead to great and dangerous errors. Every thing which belongs to man and his opinions, whatever their object may be, is necessarily progressive, that is to say, variable and transitory. This truth is evident in politics, in science, in social organization, and in the economy of government and of industry.

The savage state appears to be a stationary one; but it cannot serve as the basis of any system, because it is impossible to explain, either by reasoning or by facts, the way in which man departed from it, and the very instant of his departure from it is the signal of a progressive movement which the human race obeys with an indefatigable perseverance and activity. When it meets with obstacles in its path, it labors to surmount them. Its labor is more or less visible, according to the nature of the obstacles and the dangers which it must face in overcoming them; but even when this labor is not perceived, it is still carried on, and, in the end, it is always in favor of progress, that success is decided.

Contemplate the course of civil and political society. As it departs from the savage state, we find theocracy.

The annals of every people go back to the reign of the Gods. This reign of the Gods is nothing but the absolute empire of an order governing the rest of the human race, by virtue of a commission from heaven and of a mysterious supremacy, the privilege of which this order arrogates to itself. Slavery, consecrated by theocracy, is more severe, more humiliating, and above all, as long as its principle endures, less susceptible of mitigation, and for a still stronger reason, of abolition, than that which at a subsequent period is founded upon the right of conquest. The slave of the warrior is a man like himself, who, though no longer his equal, retains the same nature, and whom the vicissitudes of fortune only have reduced to a state of inferiority and subjection. The slave of the priest, in a theocracy, is inferior to his master by his very nature. He is an unclean and degraded being, who cannot wipe away the ineffaceable stain imprinted on him from his birth, and which he must bear engraved on his forehead even to the tomb.

Theocracy, destroyed probably by the rising of the warriors against the priests, is succeeded by civil servitude. This is a step, of which the consequences at first are more important in theory than in practice, since warlike habits give the new slavery a cruel and sanguinary form; but nevertheless it is a step in advance. It is no longer a divine will, immutable and irresistible, which divides the human race into the two classes of oppressors and oppressed; it is the lot of arms, the fortune of battle. The master may become a slave in his turn. The sanction of religion, the consecration of mystery, the difference of nature between

the class which binds and that which bears the chains,—all these things have disappeared.

This social order, which is still so imperfect and vexatious, is succeeded by another, which is no longer precisely slavery, although, in many respects, it resembles it. But, while it admits an immense interval between the class which commands and that which obeys, it supposes a kind of tacit compact between the two classes, for it recognises respective rights. This is the system which has been called feudalism. The slave, under a theocracy, had not the rank of a man; the slave, under the law of conquest, did not find this attribute called in question, but was deprived of all the rights that proceed from it; his life was at the mercy of his master, and he could call no property his own. The life of the serf, if not guarantied by the law, is yet taken into consideration, though in an unequal and revolting manner, and this is a proof that it begins to possess a certain value. His property is precarious, submitted to unjust conditions and often surrendered, without defence, to the caprice or avarice of the master. Nevertheless, the process of spoliation is neither so rapid nor so arbitrary; it demands forms, deceptive indeed and too easily evaded, but which contain the germ of a future, more impartial justice, and are the homage rendered to the presentiment of this justice. Who can deny that here is an important progress, the manifest precursor and inevitable cause of future progress?

But soon however nobility takes the place of feudalism. Nobility, in fact, is nothing but feudalism deprived of its most odious pretensions. The life, the property,

the personal liberty of the plebeian acquire safeguards. They are still exposed to injury, but in a mitigated form. The path to wealth is opened to the commonalty; and the nobility, which can do nothing to oppose this, finds consolation in the appearance of contempt, and indemnifies itself by a monopoly of favors, which remains to it for some time yet. But compare the slave of the primitive theocracy, the Helot of Sparta, the serf of the Middle Ages, with the plebeian even under Louis XIV. and you will perceive the immense career which the human race has gone through. It does not belong to our subject to follow it any further in this ever-progressive march. They who shall write within the next fifty years will have many other steps to trace.

What we now say of the advancement of political or civil society, might be said with no less reason of the sciences; but any developement on this point would be superfluous, because the truth is too evident; and we ought to remark that progress takes place not only in the sense, that they who are engaged with the sciences advance from one discovery to another, and thus carry forward the science which forms the object of their meditations; but progress is accomplished also in another manner, to which we might give the name horizontal, if we were not disinclined to unusual expressions. It is the case not only that instructed men gain a higher point of information, but a more considerable portion of the human race enters into the class of instructed men. The knowledge which was formerly the property of a small number becomes that of a much larger number, and hence, ideas gain, by turns, both in intensity and in extent.

The case is the same with regard to morality. Limited, at first, to the family, it gradually spreads to the whole people, and soon, more and more generalizing its laws, it applies its rules to the whole human race.

Industry is submitted to the same law of progress. In the savage state, and at the warlike epoch which immediately succeeds the savage state, there is no such thing as industry. As long as force seems to be a sure means of obtaining the possession of a desired object, this means must needs be preferred to every other. When man is taught by experience that this means is not infallible, he conceives the idea of exchange, and industry, which multiplies the objects of exchange, is then produced.

Exchange, commerce, which is nothing but the realization of exchange,—industry, which is nothing but the creation of objects of exchange, are, at bottom, only the homage which is rendered to the force of the possessor by the aspirant to the possession. They are attempts to obtain, by free consent, what there is no hope of seizing by violence. A man who was always conscious of superior strength would submit to no attempts of this kind; he would not conceive any necessity for it; but when he is convinced by facts that war, that is to say, the employment of his force against the force of another, is exposed to a multiplicity of resistances and checks, he seeks for milder and more peaceable means of gaining the interest of others for that which belongs to his own interest.

This progress, certainly, forces itself upon our notice, but it does not stop here.

Industry, for a long time inferior to landed property,

in respect to influence and rank, gradually becomes equal to it, and soon takes precedence of it. As it opens a freer and broader career to man, it perpetually tends to make available the means by aid of which, this career can be accomplished with greater ease and rapidity. Landed property comes to be regarded as only one of these means; it is then divided for the sake of more convenient distribution and every thing which opposes this division is without effect. Land is broken up and becomes movable; it is dispersed, so to speak, in a thousand hands, which lay hold of it rather to transmit it to others than to retain possession of it themselves. Landed property is a chattel subject to order, which is negotiated as soon as one can do better with the capital which it represents; for it is no longer capital that represents land, but land that represents capital.

This revolution changes society to its foundation. Landed property is the value of the thing, industry that of the man. The epoch, in which landed property is submitted to industry, that is to say, forced to assume the nature of industry and place itself on a level with it, is that of a new progress in the course of moral worth and intellectual improvement.

We have alluded to these different examples, in order to shew that there exists a law of progression, which is of constant and universal operation.

Ought religion alone to form an exception to this law? While none of the institutions, the forms, the notions contemporaneous with the infancy of the social state, would be adapted to a more improved state, should religion alone be condemned to remain imper-

fect and stationary, in the midst of universal movement and general amelioration?

Most assuredly not. To say that the same religion can be adapted to a savage horde and to a civilized people, to a nation plunged in ignorance and to an enlightened community, is to utter an absurdity, which would strike every mind at once, if it were not surrounded with a delusion that makes it regarded as sacred.

This is, by no means, injurious to the divinity of religion, or to speak more correctly, of the inward sentiment on which all religious convictions repose. The stronger the faith in the goodness and the justice of a Providence, which has created man, and which serves as his guide, the more natural is the admission, that this beneficent Providence proportions its teachings to the condition of the intelligences, to which those teachings are destined.

Besides, it is only this doctrine which can reconcile the ideas of Divine Providence that are cherished by religious men with the nature of the human mind. It cannot be denied that the mind has an invincible propensity to inquiry and examination. If its most imperative duty, if its loftiest merit were an implicit credulity, why should Heaven have endowed it with a faculty which it cannot exercise, and subjected it to a want which it cannot satisfy without guilt? Is it in order to demand of it the absolute sacrifice of this faculty?

But this sacrifice would reduce it to the rank of a mere machine; it would be a kind of suicide. The God who should impose it on man, would resemble the Amida of those idolaters who are crushed under the

chariot-wheels of their idol, rather than the pure and benevolent Intelligence which Christianity offers to our adoration and our love.

Still further, this implicit credulity, this immobility in dogmas, this stationary character in opinions, which are recommended in the name of religion, are no less at war with the religious sentiment than they are contrary to nature. What, in fact, is the religious sentiment? The craving after a knowledge of the relations between man and the invisible beings that influence his destiny. It belongs to its very essence, that in order to gain satisfaction, it should make trial of every religious form which is created or which is presented to it; but it also belongs to its essence, whenever these religious forms no longer satisfy it, to modify them in such a manner, as to remove from them what is injurious, or even to adopt some new form which it finds more appropriate. A mortal blow is given to it, if it be limited to the present which no longer suffices for it, if it be forbidden those aspirations after the future, which are awakened by the insufficiency of the present. Wherever it is thus shackled, wherever successive modifications in the existing forms and dogmas are impossible, there may be superstition, because superstition is the surrender of intelligence and the blind attachment to prescribed usages; there may be fanaticism, because fanaticism is superstition run mad; but there cannot be religion, because religion is the fruit of the wants of the soul and the efforts of intelligence, and because both are placed out of the question by stationary dogmas.

If we wished to establish this assertion on undenia-

ble facts, we would point to the examples of Italy, on the one side, and of the Ottoman Empire, on the other. In Italy, the progress of intelligence being restrained on no other subject but that of religion, what is the consequence? That Italy, enlightened on many other points, is, as far as faith is concerned, subjected at once to superstition and incredulity. Among the Turks, the foresight of their prophet having doomed to immobility not only the doctrines of religion, but every object of human thought, what do we see? A complete apathy in ordinary times, and a fanaticism awakened in great crises, no less senseless and cruel, than it was in the days of Omar. But, in both cases, there is no place left for the religious sentiment; for religion properly so called. Religion ceases to be salutary, it does not really exist, and exercise its legitimate influence, when it is no longer in harmony with all our faculties, when it is in the rear of any portion of our knowledge. In every case of this kind, the faculties which it would repress, the knowledge which it would discard, revolt against it and avenge themselves by its destruction.

If you undertake to maintain inviolate a doctrine, which came into being at a time when men were ignorant of all the laws of physical nature, you arm against this doctrine all the discoveries that are made relative to these laws. As a knowledge of the material world increases, the religion established before this knowledge suffers injury. We need only refer to the advantage which unbelievers have gained from the Astronomy and Physics of the Bible.

In the same way, as manners are softened and mo-

rals improved, is it not plain, that if we desire to perpetuate in religion the rites and practices which were in use before this amelioration, a struggle must ensue, and that in spite of the triumphs, more or less prolonged, which an external aid may secure to the forms of worship, whose last hour has arrived, these forms must come out of the struggle with loss of influence and of honor?

If the limits which we have marked out for ourselves permitted, we might appeal to history, and show that in almost every case, it is because the defenders of particular religions have obstinately resisted the necessary improvements, that they have been destroyed, even contrary to the intentions of those who wished only to modify and correct them, in certain specific points. The priests of Athens, as we have elsewhere observed,[1] having been the first to destroy the good understanding which subsisted between philosophy and polytheism, a few of the philosophers were made to suffer, but nevertheless it was polytheism which perished. Philosophy survived the shock; and at a later period, the inflexibility of Leo X. decided, for a great portion of Europe, the abolition of Catholicism, which Luther himself did not anticipate when he commenced his attacks upon the Romish Church.[2]

It is, therefore, a great error to suppose that it is the interest of religion to remain immutable; on the contrary, it is its interest that the progressive faculty, which is a law of human nature, should be applied to it, as to every thing else. When religious

[1] *De la Religion*, Tom. I. p. 151.

[2] See Note A.

opinions remain behind the general march of the human mind, hostile and isolated as they are, after having transformed their allies into adversaries, they behold themselves, if we may so speak, surrounded by enemies, whom they have created for themselves. The authority which can disperse its enemies is unable to vanquish them. They every day increase in numbers and in strength; they are recruited even by their defeats; and they obstinately renew the attacks, which cannot fail to terminate in a victory, which will be consummate in proportion to the length of time that it has been contested.

But if it be the interest of religion to keep pace with intelligence, such is not the interest of the priesthood. The power of the priesthood depends on the immutability of doctrines and is destroyed by their progress.

Thus, in every age, the priesthood of all religions has anathematized the idea of change, the attempt at improvement and even the hope of it. We need only refer the reader to the priests of Egypt, the pontiffs of ancient Rome, and the Christian priesthood, to the time of Protestantism. Even Protestantism itself, although its principle was in accordance with the truth which we have announced, and its secession can be justified only by the adoption of this truth in its full extent; Protestantism itself, we repeat, has appeared unfaithful to it, from its very beginning. After having asserted the legitimacy of free inquiry, it has desired to appropriate free inquiry as a monopoly; and while the Catholic Church said to its disciples, Believe and do not examine, Protestantism for a long time has said to its disciples, Examine, but believe as

if you had not examined. The advantage, certainly, between these two modes of reasoning, was on the side of the Catholic Church.[1]

Still, as every truth must bear its fruits, that which had awakened in the souls of the Reformers of the fifteenth century, a sense of the rights of mental independence, has not delayed to break the chains, with which its first organs undertook to load it. And it is from the bosom of the Protestant Church, that Christianity, restored at once to its ancient purity and to its progressive advancement, is now presented as a doctrine contemporaneous with every age, because it keeps pace with every age; open to every access of light, because it accepts it from every quarter; enriching itself with every discovery, because it contends against none; placing itself on a level with every epoch, and thus laying aside every notion which is behind the progress that is daily made by the human mind.

Should any one, through ignorance or dishonesty, or perhaps through considerations of local or personal interest, call in question these assertions, we would only refer him to the works of the principal Protestant theologians of Germany.

In our opinion, then, we must start from this principle, if we wish to pay that homage to religion which is worthy of it, and at the same time, to support it on the only solid and indestructible foundation; and it is in this manner, that we shall proceed in the following considerations.

[1] See Note B.

We say that religion is a sentiment inherent in man. We see, in fact, all nations, whether savage or cultivated, bowing before the foot of the altar.

We say that the form in which religion is clothed is always proportioned to the social state of the nations or tribes by which it is professed. And, in fact, Fetichism with the savage, Polytheism, as it is described by Homer among the Greeks of the heroic ages, the same polytheism improved among the Athenians of the time of Pericles, the morality and spirituality introduced into this faith since that epoch, the endeavor to free it from the gross and degrading traditions with regard to the objects of worship, the tendency towards unity at a still later epoch, the appearance of theism, at the moment when reflection and experience begin to demonstrate the uselessness of a multiplicity of causes to explain the phenomena of nature or the vicissitudes of destiny, in fine, the triumph of the monotheistic doctrine as soon as the human mind has obtained a more perfect light,—all these things compose a series of facts which demonstrate the unceasing connexion of religion with the progress of intelligence, and its tendency at all times to place itself on a level with this progress. That, moreover, at certain epochs, this tendency should be favored by means above our frail and imperfect nature; that, for example, when man was incapable of receiving the notion of theism, this notion should all at once spring up, as an inexplicable phenomenon, in the midst of an ignorant tribe; that, afterwards, the human mind having risen to the idea of unity, but still finding itself unable to transform this abstract idea into an animated and living doctrine,

should be blessed with an unexpected aid,—this, by no means, affects the truth of our assertion; the tendency exists and the additional aid is exercised only in conformity with this tendency.

We say, finally, that the priesthood makes perpetual efforts to arrest or retard this progress; and in fact, the conjurer of Fetichism struggles against polytheism, which, by ascribing the human form to the Gods, breaks the hideous images of the Fetiches and destroys the influence of the superstitious rites of their interpreters. The priests of Dodona, as heirs or representatives of the grossest forms of belief, preserve the manners, the habits, the divinations of the conjurers, persist in the homage which they render to the sacred doves, the prophetic oaks, and denounce the religion of Homer as a modern invention and a sacrilege, which adapting its instructions to the growth of society, re-unites the Gods in a body, because their worshippers compose a people.

Upon the triumph of the Homeric polytheism, the priesthood, which strives to gain possession of it, exerts its influence, precarious and contested as it is, to prevent this religious form from advancing with the ideas of the age. It opposes any amelioration of the character of the Gods, even when an amelioration has taken place in the morality of men. It is unwilling that their essence should become more pure; it prohibits metaphysics from applying to them the obscure but seducing hypothesis of immateriality. It announces their wants, their passions, their weaknesses, their vices, as articles of faith, and immutable dogmas. It proscribes the Spiritualism of Anax-

agoras, punishes the morality of Socrates, threatens the logic of Aristotle, without reflecting that in thus separating religion from the general movement, it arms this movement against itself and provokes incredulity.

When, at length, in spite of this ill-advised resistance, polytheism has undergone inevitable modifications, the priesthood, accepting these modifications, attempts anew to plant its banner in opposition to further progress; and, when it sees the growth of theism, of which those modifications contain the germ and prepare for the developement, it raises the voice of authority against it, always pledged to the present, always the enemy of the future; and the populace,—the ferocious auxiliary of this authority, which keeps it in pay,—accompanies the Christians at the amphitheatre with its shouts, and feeds on the agonies of the martyrs.

We have thus proved our first three assertions, namely, the universality of the religious sentiment, the tendency of this sentiment to clothe itself in more and more perfect forms, and the resistance of the priesthood to the perfecting of these forms; but it remains for us to point out the circumstance, which, favorable to the stationary system, has deceived the most penetrating minds, and concealed from them the necessarily progressive march of religion.

As soon as man has obtained any conception of the Gods,—and this he does as soon as he looks upon the world around him, or, retiring within himself, consults his inward sentiment,—he feels the want of securing their favor. He attempts in a thousand ways

to satisfy this want. He sees those by whom he is surrounded engaging in the same attempts. Some of them boast of their success, and conviction, in this respect, goes before imposture. Those who are the most humble and the least confident of their own strength, surround these privileged mortals; they solicit, they implore, they purchase their assistance. The profession of interpreter of Heaven becomes profitable; and wherever there is profit, there is soon calculation.

Hence, even Fetichism has its conjurers; and with these conjurers there is a constant endeavor to make a monopoly of religion.

Observe in the midst of the most degraded hordes, how they seclude themselves in a sanctuary impenetrable to the vulgar. Observe them, no less jealous than the Druids of Gaul, or the Bramins of India, of every thing which belongs to their sacred functions, imposing strange and painful trials on the candidate for admission to their order, dooming the rash individuals who neglect or disdain the prescribed mode of affiliation, to a death which is preceded by the most ingenious punishments, enjoining an inviolable secrecy, inventing a language unintelligible to all but the initiated, and environing their ceremonies with darkness and terror. Apprenticed hierophants, they obey the secret instinct which, at a subsequent period, is to preside over the corporations of Hieropolis or Benares.

But the nature of Fetichism is at war with the sacerdotal dominion. The Fetich is a portable and disposable object, which its worshipper can consult

under all circumstances, for himself, and with which he can make his treaty directly. This often renders all foreign intervention annoying or superfluous. Thus the conjurers, clothed as they sometimes are with a terrible power, are yet compelled to hear this power incessantly called in question. How then does it happen, that many nations, as they depart from Fetichism, or even while they remain attached to this system, under a more regular form, accord to the priests a permanent and unlimited authority?

Is the circumstance of climate sufficient to explain this phenomenon? No; for the priesthood, at some period or other, has possessed an unlimited ascendency in every variety of climate.

Can we find a more satisfactory cause in the fact of physical convulsions? No; for all parts of the globe have undergone these convulsions, and there are some portions of the globe where the priests have remained without power.

Shall we succeed any better in extorting this secret from history, if we seek the solution of the enigma in the action of colonies? No; for we cannot admit the action of colonies as a primary cause. To say that a particular colony has imposed institutions on a particular country, is only to explain why the subjugated country has received them; but it still remains to explain why they were established in the mother country of the colony which has borne them abroad.

The cause of the sacerdotal power is to be found in a circumstance more nearly connected with the notions that are cherished concerning the objects of adoration; and this circumstance is at once indispen-

sable to the solution of the problem and sufficient for it.

There are some nations whose whole existence depends on the observation of the stars.

There are others which abound with every variety of physical phenomena; the former are led to substitute for Fetichism or to combine with it, the worship of the heavenly bodies; a necessity, no less imperious, compels the latter to the adoration of the elements.

Now each of these two systems at once creates a priesthood, clothed with a power which the conjurers of the savage do not and cannot exercise.

In order to know the movement of the stars, to observe the phenomena of nature, a certain degree of attention and of study is requisite.

This necessity, from the earliest periods of society, and even while the mass of the people is still in a completely savage state, gives birth to corporations, which make the study of the stars their occupation, the observation of nature their principal aim, and the facts which they thus discover their property.

From that time, there are two kinds of communities, those which are independent of the priests and those which are subjected to their authority; and these two different kinds of communities possess two religions altogether different.

Among the former, there is a constant progress, as we have described above; among the latter, progress is arrested and religion remains stationary.

Such is the spectacle presented to us by India, Ethiopia, and Egypt. The progressive faculty is smitten with immobility; every discovery is prohibited,

every advancement is a crime, every innovation a sacrilege. The employment of that noble art which registers and diffuses thought is interdicted as an impiety. Religion does not lay aside th ehideous vestiges of gross Fetichism; the Gods are clothed in a shapeless form, their character remains passionate and vicious.

Among the Greeks, on the contrary, emancipated from the sacerdotal yoke, at least, after the heroic ages, every thing is progressive. They seize from the theocratic corporations of the East and South, the elements of the sciences, which those corporations held captive within their mysterious precincts. Languid and imperfect as were those sciences in the night of the sanctuary, they revive, they gain expansion and strength, they advance towards perfection, when brought into the clear light of day; and intelligence, pursuing its fearless march, leaping from hypothesis to hypothesis, no doubt through a thousand errors, nevertheless arrives, if not at absolute truth, which is perhaps beyond its reach, at least, at those relative truths, which are demanded by the age, and which are so many steps for the attainment of other truths, of a more elevated order and of a superior importance. Religion is acted upon by this movement of intelligence, it is flooded, on every side, with a torrent of light, which pervades and regenerates it.

In both cases, however, a movement opposed to the predominant tendency struggles against it, and the oscillations of this struggle may lead into error, those observers who have not seized the fundamental truth.

On the one hand, as no human effort can gain a com-

plete victory over the natural laws, there will be some progress even in the sacerdotal religions, though it will be slow and in by-paths; but it will have this peculiarity, that as intelligence is concentrated in a privileged order, there will be no progress except in this order; but as the interest of this order is opposed to progress, so far from rejoicing in the progress that it makes, it is frightened at it; so far from boasting of it, it carefully conceals it from all who have not been initiated into its mysteries.

On the other hand, as the sacerdotal interest is contrary to progress, even in independent religions, the priesthood will attempt to arrest it and will often succeed in preventing its manifestation.

It results from this, that they who do not sufficiently notice the connexion of events, and who do not ascend to their primary cause, are unable to perceive, in any place, the fact of regular progress. They see every where, in Greece as in Egypt, in the most improved Protestantism as in the most rigid Catholicism, dogmas and priests, and philosophers, the antagonists of dogmas and the victims of priests. This incredulity, which is an effect, they regard as a cause; they believe that it is voluntary, while it is forced; they travesty an epoch into a revolt.

They deceive themselves. It does not depend upon fancy whether people shall be devotees or irreligious. A man dŏes not doubt because he wishes to doubt, any more than he believes because he wishes to believe. There are times when it is impossible to disseminate doubt; there are others, when it is impossible to restore conviction.

Incredulity grows out of the disproportion which exists between the objects presented to adoration or the dogmas proposed to belief, and the state of mind on which this adoration is enjoined or this belief imposed; and the epoch of this disproportion arrives sooner in independent nations, and later in those which are in subjection to the priests; but it inevitably arrives in both.

It arrives sooner in the first, because sacerdotal oppression with them is only an accident, an exception to the general rule; and later in the others, because sacerdotal oppression is itself the rule, because the attempt to shake off its yoke demands greater efforts and involves more formidable perils.

There is, accordingly, a difference between these two kinds of religion, in regard to time; there is also a difference, in regard to mode.

In the free religions, every modification, being brought about by opinion, which is modified, is perceived, even before its final accomplishment. A change takes place in the rites, the traditions draw back into the obscure distance, so that they are forgotten by the believers, and are recalled only by the incredulous for the sake of being attacked. New ideas display themselves without reserve; every thing is brought into open daylight. The least practised eye can distinguish the religion of Homer from that of Pindar; and in the Roman worship, which although sacerdotal by its Etruscan origin, soon assumed, in many respects, a Grecian character, even before the establishment of the Republic, it is impossible to lose sight of the interval which separates the human sacrifices from the images of straw that were cast into the Tiber.

The sacerdotal religions on the contrary, are modified, with closed doors, in the shades of darkness. The forms, the expressions, the rites remain the same. Under the Emperors, as before Menes, the Egyptians still precipitated a young virgin into the Nile. Every thing seems to be rigid and immutable, even to the complete destruction of those religions.

In the former case, religion was an edifice, which is built, repaired, embellished in the sight of all, to the very moment when the repairs, the embellishments, the alterations which it undergoes, bring it to an end; in the other, the edifice preserves externally all the appearance of solidity, which it no longer possesses within, and there is no warning of the danger which threatens it until it is prostrated in ruin.

The developement of these ideas would require volumes. We must reserve it for an occasion, on which we shall be less restricted by time and space. We would here invite our readers to think for themselves rather than to ask us to think for them, and as we are sure that the result of their reflections cannot be other than useful, we shall not regret to be anticipated by them. In the great labor which we have undertaken, we must ever regard our rivals as auxiliaries.

We will accordingly omit our historical verifications, the reply to objections, and the numerous facts which we might appeal to; and proceed to deduce the consequences of the principles which we have established. These consequences, in our opinion, are the following.

Religion is progressive; and by reason of this characteristic, it is gradually ameliorated and purified, and

advances towards perfection. When this progress is not interrupted, religion can effect nothing but good; provided it retains its independence, it possesses a certain utility under each of these forms, which is lost when the forms are destroyed and which disappears whenever it is attempted to prolong them beyond their natural duration.

Fetichism, altogether absurd as it is, by the single fact that it compels the savage to recognise a power superior to himself, teaches him not to make his own force the only arbiter of the Just and the Unjust, of good and evil. It introduces, between this savage and his fellows, the sanctity of an oath; it impresses the idea of sacrifice upon his mind; it enables him, at times, to triumph over his impetuous passions, and his gross appetites; and it is no small thing, in a situation almost like that of the brutes, to call forth the germ, in the bosom of ignorance, of the conception of an invisible world, and of a certain dim presentiment of Immortality. Allow intelligence to be free, and this germ will be fructified.

Polytheism, in its most imperfect form, adds new benefits to Fetichism, of which it takes the place. Society, in its infancy, finds a basis and sanction, in this belief; and consecrated truces interrupt the ferocious wars of barbarous tribes. These fierce and suspicious people are brought together at religious festivals; the Gods, although selfish and passionate, like their worshippers, compose a more august society, before which they blush at shameful actions, and which they fear to offend by unworthy deeds.

As it gains in perfection, polytheism becomes every

day more salutary. The assembly of the immortals throws off its resemblance to human nature; its forms are refined, its passions purified; it lends its supernatural guarantee to every virtue; it directs its severity against all injustice; it extends its protection to the stranger and the helpless; after having confirmed the bonds of country which unite individuals in their relations as citizens, it establishes the bonds of humanity, of hospitality, which unite them in their relations as men; and that sublime idea of universal fraternity arises, which the divine author of our faith proclaimed, but which religion, free from all material authority, had already conceived and matured.

Man, at length, gaining new light every day, can no longer bear the parcelling out of the infinite and divine nature among a crowd of imperfect and limited beings; he combines them in the conception of a single Supreme Being, and theism descends from heaven to earth.

Without doubt, great evil has been inflicted upon humanity, in the name of religion. The *auto-da-fe* has taken the place of human sacrifices; a new monopoly, extending over every branch of knowledge and all kinds of instruction, has, for many centuries, plunged the people in ignorance.

But what are we to conclude from this? That theocratic corporations have perverted the religious sentiment, by perpetuating the forms, which were good only for one epoch; that the religious sentiment has been in a constant struggle with these powerful corporations; that, while it tends to improve the forms in which it is clothed, and to bring them into a just and

salutary agreement with the contemporaneous ideas of every epoch, the corporations, which have regarded it only as the foundation of their authority, have endeavored to confine it within stationary limits, though it is essentially progressive; and that a violent struggle between the tendency natural to man and the will of these corporations, has converted a source of hope into an instrument of terror, a consolation into tyranny, a blessing into a scourge.

What, then, can be more unjust or absurd than to confound the religious sentiment which always tends to a progressive developement with the efforts of an exclusive order, whose dark and obstinate labor attempts to hinder this developement? Do we not renounce every thing like discrimination, when we smite with the same anathema both the victim and the executioners?

No, the religious sentiment is by no means responsible for what has been done in its name by irreligious men; for they are irreligious who make of religion an instrument of power. The members of the sacerdotal corporations who, in Egypt, tyrannized over kings and people, or who, in Persia, lent a mercenary support to political oppression, did not regard as a divine thing the worship, by whose abuse they profited; men do not make a subject of speculation, of that which they consider divine.

We must say, moreover, to the generation which is now coming upon the stage; it is more worthy, this generation, than we were at the same age; it is grave, studious, filled with the love of good, and inspired with a perfectly just idea; this is what, before every thing

else, it is important for us to know. But, like all rising generations, it deems itself called upon to reconstruct the world, which its predecessors have only begun to demolish; and yet, like all rising generations, it is under the dominion of the prejudices and habits of those very predecessors whom it so much despises. A certain frivolous incredulity, which can no longer be called either a disposition of the heart or a conviction of the intellect, but which floats on the surface, as a time-hallowed tradition, and in some sense, preserves the authority of a settled thing, bewilders and paralyzes this generation which, though powerful in study, is feeble in experience. The Positive and Practical seems, in its opinion, to have placed sentiment out of the question, and, if we listen to it, religion will henceforth be foreign to the reality of life; but it deceives itself. In whatever manner, the theories and the hopes, which preside over religious opinions are attacked, whatever anathema, ironical or serious, an age may direct against them,—that which constitutes their intrinsic essence will survive.

Who would not have supposed that they were vanquished in the time of Juvenal, or when the applauses of the civilized world encouraged Lucian in the insults which he lavished upon them? Nevertheless, the religious sentiment soon reappeared, more powerful than ever, in a new form; and even among modern nations, has not intolerance done its utmost to make religion odious? Has not a scoffing ridicule attempted every means to render it contemptible,—and yet the religious sentiment is every where awake. Look at the crowd of sects in England which make religion the subject

of their most ardent zeal, and of their assiduous meditations; and yet England takes the lead, among the nations of Europe, in labor, industry and production. Look at America. More fortunate than England, for it has not, like that country, a clergy which claims the oppression of a province, under the pretence that it is Catholic.[1] America covers the ocean with its flag; it surpasses every nation in its application of physical resources; and yet, such is the authority of the religious sentiment in that country, that a single family is often divided among several sects, with no interruption of domestic affection and peace, because its members are united in the adoration of a just and beneficent Providence, as travellers meet, with pleasure, at the end of their journey, which they have reached by different paths.

The action of the religious sentiment is no less manifest in other places; as of old, it is now seeking for a form; it demands one that is free, noble and pure, and as of old, it rejects the priests of Cybele who, annoying it with their cries, revolting it with their threats, and wearying it with their littleness, are its most troublesome adversaries and its most dangerous enemies.

Let us leave religion to itself; ever progressive and

[1] It will be perceived, that this was written before the emancipation of the Catholics, a measure which we might appeal to in support of all our assertions on the infallible and irresistible progress of ideas. Lord Wellington completing what Mr. Canning could not do and dared no longer to attempt! What more incontestable proof, that all events are governed by the force of things, of which men are only the instruments.

ever symmetrical, it will advance in union with ideas, it will gain light with the march of intelligence, it will be purified with the improvement of morality, and at every epoch, it will sanction all that is good and true which it possesses. At every epoch, let us contend for religious liberty; it will surround religion with an invincible force and will guaranty its perfectibility. This was the view of the divine author of our faith, when, rebuking the Pharisees and Scribes, he demanded charity, liberty and light for every human being.

II.

ON THE HUMAN CAUSES WHICH HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHRISTIANITY.

Long before the commencement of our era, Polytheism had arrived at its highest degree of relative perfection; but relative perfection is transitory, like every thing which belongs to our nature. Imperfect in Æschylus, perfect in Sophocles, from that moment polytheism began to decline, since the germs of its decay are apparent in Euripides. Those germs were numerous.

The Gods were multiplied to infinity, by personifications and allegories. Hence a strange confusion in doctrines, fables and observances.

A growing disproportion between the dogmas of polytheism and the condition of intelligence was introduced.

The progress of physical knowledge, discovering the natural causes of events which were formerly considered miraculous, had shaken the ancient religious traditions.

The inevitable struggle between religious and political power had produced an unhappy effect on the opinion of the people.

Philosophy, after having marched for a long time by the side of polytheism, had now turned against it, since it had begun to suffer from its oppression.

The most discordant opinions were heaped up in the occult portion of religion; and the depositaries of this mysterious portion, proud as men always are of the possession of secrets, left them to be guessed by the people.

The result of all these causes was for the enlightened classes, an unequal participation in the philosophical opinions, which were all opposed to polytheism; and for the people, a brutal incredulity, as absurd as the most absurd superstition, since, like that, it was not founded on examination.

Still the religious sentiment sought to satisfy itself. Ridicule, while it saps the prevailing belief, does not destroy the need of believing; it makes it, in some sort, a need ashamed of itself, but on that account only the more ardent and excitable, because it can be indulged only by stealth, and thus satisfied imperfectly and with difficulty, while care is taken, that if the person be discovered, he may avoid ridicule by laughing at himself.

The condition of the human species, at this epoch, is one of the strangest, and soon becomes the most melancholy.

Skepticism has destroyed all conviction at its root. Morality is shaken, less indeedas yet by the direct effects of incredulity, than by the remembrance of the religious traditions which survive this incredulity. These traditions, in credulous times, serve as the foundation of moral ideas; but when the foundation falls away, the ideas also fall with it. It is not always certain that a given religion does good, so long as it is believed; but it is certain that every religion does harm, as soon as it is denied.

The whole world was in this condition when Christianity appeared. A portion of the human race, weary of the incredulity of which it had boasted, sought to replace the lost belief by the adoption of foreign religions; another portion substituted for it the extravagances of magic; while still another endeavored to attach itself to the fallen religion.

This last attempt is the only one which interests us, because it was the principal cause of the struggle which Christianity had to sustain, and of the obstacles which it was called to encounter. It is therefore exclusively with this attempt that we are now to occupy ourselves.

Whenever the question is raised, concerning the return to a belief, on which discredit has been cast, the very persons, who desire to restore it to authority and favor, are not agreed as to what portion of it, it is useful and possible to preserve or reestablish.

Hence, immediately before the final downfall of polytheism, we see its partisans divided, according to their interests and habits, between two different paths, though both professing to lead to the same end. The first wished to return to polytheism, as it had been professed in the times of a docile piety, before the prevalence of philosophical objections and doubts. Transmitted from generation to generation, said they, prior to all abstract speculations, which end only in vague conjectures, did it not, for a long succession of ages, secure purity of morals, public tranquillity, and the happiness of the people? Instead of abandoning himself to the blind gropings of pretended sages, who contradict each other, is it not better that man should

adopt, as his rule of truth, the instructions of his fathers, that he should take for his guides those favored individuals, the illustrious ancestors of the human race, and the disciples of the Gods from the beginning of the world?

No work containing this system of orthodoxy in polytheism has come down to us, but Plutarch tells us, by an example, what was the logic of its defenders. The unbelievers of that age derived objections to the divinity of the oracles from the barbarous style of the Pythoness, almost precisely as the unbelievers of the eighteenth century sought for arguments against the Bible in certain expressions which appeared strange to them. The orthodox polytheists, far from confessing that the style of the Pythoness was barbarous, replied that it appeared so only to a generation unworthy of perceiving its primitive and simple beauties, and that it was not the language of the Gods which needed to be changed, but men, who must gain a new power of feeling its sublimity.

Thus, far from compromising with incredulity on the imperfections and the pretended grossness of the preceding notions, they affirmed that these accusations were dictated only by the presumption of man, who is always enamored of novelty. Let us not bend religion, say they, under arbitrary modifications; but, on the contrary, let us bring under its yoke the rebellious spirits, which have been corrupted by the habit of rash examination and which aim to sacrifice the holy traditions of the past to their vain and delusive refinements.

It was the wish of this party that the writings of

Cicero should be burned. They rejected the expositions of the philosophers; they proved by incontestable facts, that morals had been strict in proportion as the fables had been received with a literal faith, which a presumptuous reason affected to disdain; they repeated what had been affirmed by the great men of past ages; and at the same time, they enjoyed the advantage of presenting something fixed and established, while those who departed from the rigor of orthodoxy offered nothing but what was vague and ambiguous.

These efforts, nevertheless, could not meet with success. Man does not recover his respect for that which has ceased to appear respectable. At the bottom of all the apparent enthusiasm for the ancient polytheism, there was nothing but calculation. At this epoch of its decline, there was a desire to believe, since the misery of doubt awakened a regret for the lost joys of a sincere faith; as at a former epoch, it was sustained because it was thought that its general reception would be a matter of utility. But its weakness was too far developed; the outrages which it had received were irreparable. When opinions have received their death-blow, remembrance hovers around the altars, which it wishes to surround with the pristine majesty that is now eclipsed. If incredulity is no longer a proof of intelligence, a subject of glory, it has become a habit; and precisely as at its commencement the incredulous were disturbed by religious reminiscences, so now, the men who wish to become religious are disturbed by incredulous reminiscences.

The orthodox defenders of polytheism, consequently, were unable to obtain success. But another party presented itself, whose hopes appeared plausible and whose concessions to the spirit of the age must needs have diminished the resistance of opinion, as they cast upon the adversaries of the religion which they defended the odium of pertinacious hostility.

This party undertook to explain, allegorically or metaphysically, the fables which were revolting to the general convictions at that time; it justified them by recourse to a mysterious sense. Poetry, on the one hand, and philosophy on the other, furnished it with the means of apology or of explanation; and nothing is more curious than to observe the efforts of the most ingenious men of the second and third centuries of our era, to combine two irreconcileable things, namely, the most exalted enthusiasm, of which they felt the need in the construction of a belief, and the most arid abstraction, of which their philosophy made them feel a no less imperious need. We cannot here bring forward examples, as they would carry us too far from our subject; but whoever has read the Enneads of Plotinus must have remarked that he starts from the supposition of a first principle, destitute of intelligence, of will, of every physical and moral quality, in order to arrive at a system, by which he enjoys an ecstatic union, four times a day, with the Divinity.

These innovators, polytheists in appearance rather than in reality, could not succeed better than the orthodox polytheists. They constructed a religion of intangible distinctions and of incompatible notions; and this religion was incapable of gaining either the

popular favor, like the ancient polytheism, in its flourishing state, or the support of reason like the philosophical doctrines. The prevailing opinion must then remain the same; and continue to vibrate between incredulity in theory and superstition in practice.

A new worship was demanded, of a more youthful and vigorous character; whose standard had not yet been profaned; and which inspiring the soul, with a genuine enthusiasm, should crush the first suggestions of doubt, instead of discussing them, and triumph over objections by not permitting them to spring up.

This worship could be nothing but theism. The religious sentiment tends towards unity; and if man does not arrive at it except after many successive revolutions, it is because this sentiment is disturbed and put in a different direction by the circumstances in which he is placed. Ignorance assigns to each specific effect a separate cause; selfishness divides the divine power in order to place it within its own reach; reasoning establishes its syllogisms on the deceptive testimony of external appearances.

But ignorance is, at length, dispelled, selfishness becomes enlightened, and reasoning is improved by experience. In proportion as the regularity of the effect is more apparent, the unity of the cause becomes probable. The sight of the disorders, the convulsions, the exceptions, in a word, to the general rule, was the means by which polytheism gained its superiority. It is now perceived that these exceptions are only apparent; accordingly polytheism loses its principal support.

At the same time, man feels the need of theism

more strongly than before; he has arrived at the extreme limit of civilization, his soul, wearied, satiated, and exhausted, inflicts sufferings on itself, more bitter than those which come to it from without. What would avail him against those sufferings, the gross Deities whose exclusively material protection was sufficient for his ignorant ancestors? What would he do with the Fetich who secured to the savage only abundant success in hunting and fishing? What would be to him those Divinities of Olympus, who, severe only against crimes, preserve their votaries only from external evils? He feels the need of other Gods who comprehend him, sustain him, restore to him the strength which he has lost, save him from himself, probe his most secret wounds and apply to them, with a soothing hand, the balm of a tender compassion. Such are the Gods, or rather, such is the God, whom he needs; for numerous Divinities, limited in their faculties, divided in their interests, imperfect by reason of these very limits and this division, cannot accomplish such difficult functions.

Immediately before the establishment of Christianity, moreover, unity had become the dominant idea of all systems, both religious and philosophical. This idea had penetrated every where; it was celebrated by the poets; it was claimed by scholars as the forgotten discovery of the most remote antiquity; it was taught by moralists; it even crept into the works of writers, without reflection of their own, and was reproduced by the pen of the merest compilers.

When this doctrine of unity did not compose the principal and avowed portion of a system, it was an-

nounced as its result. When it was not brought upon the fore-ground of the picture, it was seen in perspective; here, combined with the popular faith; there, presented as the explanation of this faith; and even the people formed sensible images of this abstract notion. Statues were every where placed on the domestic altars, in which the attributes of all the Divinities were united or confounded.

In this state of things, the human mind seemed to have arrived at the last borders of polytheism; it would have been said that only a single step remained for it to announce the unity of one God and to erect this sublime theory into a practical religion. But the very civilization which had made the duration of polytheism impossible had deprived man of that freshness of feeling, of that inward energy, of that strength of conviction, of that capability of enthusiasm, which are the necessary conditions for the establishment of a new religion, and for the uncertainties of philosophers, the confused and complicated secrets of priests, the evanescent regrets and wishes of suffering, though discouraged and exhausted souls, to be combined into one body and to compose a public, national and consecrated belief.

Theism was every where as a principle, but nowhere in its application.

Authority could have no desire for it; it scarcely knew it except as a doctrine which was hostile to the established order; and perceived it in a distinct form only among philosophers whom it held to be dangerous.

The priests, in their revelations to the initiated,

sometimes disguised theism, and sometimes rejected it. They always imposed upon it a forced alliance with the ancient traditions, and when it desired to separate from them, the preference was given by the priesthood to these traditions, in their own mystic interpretations.

Theism was adopted by many philosophers; but it was constantly discussed, every day submitted to a new examination, cited before the tribunal of all who began to frequent the schools, and understood by each in a different manner. A numerous portion of its partisans rejected the influence of ceremonies, the efficacy of prayer, the hope of supernatural aid, and thus converted theism into an abstract opinion which could not be made the foundation of a worship.

A tendency to theism undoubtedly existed in the superior ranks of society; but the interests of the world, always constant and pressing, easily drowned this inward voice. In a high state of civilization, enlightened men are very ardent for their interests and very moderate in their opinions; now, moderate parties preserve things as they are, but every new creation is beyond their power.

The people could not receive as religion an opinion which had no completeness, no consistency; they repeated certain formulas which implied the Unity of God, but rather by imitation than conviction. While with the superior classes, the habits of incredulity rendered the renovation of a religious form almost impossible, with the multitude, this renovation was made almost superfluous by magic, which offered the most powerful attractions to the imagination and the promises of a speedy accomplishment to hope.

In order to gather the human race around this, a standard was all that was wanting; but no arm was strong enough for this, and the standard remained on the ground.

Nevertheless, this memorable revolution was accomplished. An extraordinary circumstance at once restored that energy to the soul, and gave that authority to intelligence, which were needed in order to reduce the prevailing desires and wants and expectations to a positive form. We here treat of this circumstance only in its human relations; but we confess that we have no disposition to controvert the opinion which ascribes supernatural causes to this important revolution.

Indeed, when we look at the condition of man after he has abandoned all religious faith; when we see the religious sentiment, having become impotent and vague, now plunging into magic and now into ecstacy and delirium; when we see enthusiasm giving birth to extravagances, which are the more incurable as they start with reasoning, in order to arrive at absurdity in a methodical manner; when we see reason, presenting as the result of the labors of eight centuries, at first, the merest nullities, and then chimerical and contradictory hypotheses; when we see intelligence, destroying every thing and establishing nothing; shall we presume to say, that at this critical moment the compassion of Heaven did not interpose for the relief of the world; that a star did not flash athwart the cloud to point out the path to our bewildered race; that a divine hand did not aid to overthrow the barrier against which man had beat in vain?

After this, every thing would have been restored to

the usual order. Man, again left to himself, would have recommenced his labor; his mind, according to its nature, would have been exercised upon this grand discovery; he would have clothed it in imperfect forms; he would have impaired its sublimity. Calculation, selfishness, monopoly, would have disputed for its possession in order to profit by its abuses; but still man would have retained the ineffaceable remembrance of it; the immense step would have been taken; and by degrees, purer forms and juster conceptions would have permitted the enjoyment of the inestimable benefit without alloy.

At the epoch which forms the subject of our present researches, the religion of the Hebrews was the only one whose votaries had preserved not only a mechanical attachment to religious forms, but a profound conviction of their importance. At the same time, the fundamental dogma of this religion was in accordance with the universal want of the human race. It was at this torch, that the religious sentiment was rekindled.

But if the fundamental dogma of the Jewish religion corresponded to the universal want of the soul, it still possessed some fearful characteristics.

We certainly do not class ourselves among the vilifiers of the Mosaic law; we by no means forget the superiority of its doctrine, both as a whole and in many of its details, over every religion of that day; but its very sublimity contributed to stamp it with an excessive rigor,—the necessary result of the disparity between its ideas and those of the people who professed it, as well as of the neighbors who surrounded them; and who on that account had become their enemies.

Add to this the spirit of the Jewish priesthood, in many respects, not behind any of the sacerdotal corporations of antiquity; and which was made more austere and jealous by the very obstacles which it had to overcome.

It appears to us that the doctrine of Moses has not been sufficiently distinguished from the spirit of the priesthood, the organ and defender of that doctrine. It is nevertheless in this distinction that we are to find the solution of all the difficulties which at first sight appear to give such an advantage to the enemies of religious ideas and of Christianity.

For the rest, it is not our purpose here to pass judgment on the Jewish religion. It is enough, that at the moment when polytheism was approaching its utmost limit and all belief was shaken, the Jewish religion, still living and rooted in the heart of a people, presented theism, as a rallying point, to the remainder of the human race.

Still, if the theism of the Hebrews had been proposed to the nations, that rejected polytheism, in the forms in which it had been clothed from the beginning, among the people who professed it, it is doubtful whether it would have obtained the success, which has made the adoration of one God, the universal belief of all civilized nations.

Minds, accustomed to the subtilties of a philosophy, which refined on all combinations of ideas and on all the forms of dialectics, would have probably rejected a doctrine, whose dogmatic simplicity imposed articles of faith, instead of presenting a series of reasonings.

The almost total absence of ideas on the nature of

the soul, and on its immortality, would have wounded the same minds, prepared as they were, by Platonism, to yield themselves to hopes and to plunge into hypotheses with regard to the future existence of man.

The character of the Deity of the Jews, represented as despotic, suspicious and jealous, could not have been reconciled with the milder and more abstract conceptions of the sages of Greece. The multiplicity of rites, of ceremonies, and of practices would have been wearisome to men, the most religious of whom thought that inward worship and purity of life formed the most acceptable homage to the Supreme Being. In fine, the morality even of Judaism which made a primary and indispensable virtue of assent to certain propositions, would have presented too violent a contrast to the principles of tolerance that were universally adopted. But the Jews had been initiated, for some time, especially since their residence at Alexandria, into all the discussions of philosophy, and had advanced in this career, with equal steps, with the Pagan philosophers. They had exhibited no less subtilty in metaphysical researches; and towards the epoch of the appearance of Christianity, Judaism had experienced sufficient modification, to awaken curiosity in the doctrine which proceeded from its bosom, to command the attention and soon to gain the suffrages of a great number of enlightened men. It was accordingly supported, on one side, by Judaism, and at the same time, strong in all the labors of previous ages, among nations more advanced than the mass of the Jews, that Christianity appeared in the world.

It has often been said, that, from its first appear-

ance, Christianity was adopted only by the lowest and the most ignorant classes; nothing is more false, and nothing could have been more inexplicable.

It was by the progress of intelligence that the human race was carried on from polytheism to theism. Christianity was the purest form of theism, and yet it was embraced only by the populace, on which the progress of intelligence could have produced the least effect!

On the contrary, it was, according to the nature of things, that it should be adopted by men of every class. The religion which was most appropriate at that time, or rather, the only appropriate religion, was that which elevated man above all visible objects, without connecting him with any of the religious institutions which had fallen into discredit, or any of the political institutions which were oppressive; the only possible religion was that, which, at a period when the nations were only herds of slaves and among whom patriotism could not exist, should gather all nations around a common faith, and transform into brethren those men who were no longer fellow-citizens.

The Christian religion combined all these advantages. By proscribing sensuality, the love of riches and every ignoble passion, by announcing a life beyond the tomb, which on account of its eternal duration was more important, than all the happiness of the earth, it conciliated all who had preserved a sense of human dignity. By proclaiming an immediate revelation, a direct communication with the Divinity, and a series of inspirations imparted to faith and prayer and accompanied with supernatural powers, it attracted

those whom a love of the wonderful and the influences of New Platonism had accustomed to desire an habitual intercourse with super-human natures. By substituting simple and modest ceremonies, and those in small number, for rites, some of which were revolting and others fallen into contempt, it satisfied the reason. It presented relief to the poor, justice to the oppressed, liberty to the slave, as their natural rights. In fine,—and at that epoch, this was not one of its least advantages,—it carefully prohibited all philosophical and metaphysical researches, researches which gained no honor from the memory of the past; all questions as to the nature and substance of God, all hypotheses on the laws and forces of the universe and the action of the invisible world, all discussions concerning destiny in opposition to Providence. It told nothing but a fact and offered nothing but a hope. Now man needed a rock on which to rest his head; he wanted a fact, a miraculous fact, in order that, delivered from the agony of doubt, he might again breathe freely, gather up his strength and recommence the great intellectual work.

Faith in Jesus Christ was embraced moreover, from the beginning, by a multitude who were no strangers either to instruction or to opulence. Pliny testifies, that already, under the reign of Trajan, persons of every condition were united at the foot of the cross. Men of consular rank, senators, and matrons of the noblest extraction, were devoted to this worship; Christians, as they said themselves in their apologies, abounded at the court, in the camps, in the forum. Nevertheless, the standard once raised, a struggle must ensue; and in this struggle, Christianity found

among its enemies, authority, the priests, a part of the philosophers, and the populace.

Authority never examines; it judges according to appearance. It sees a society of men who care for no external worship, it pronounces them atheists.

In its relations with human existence, Christianity is diametrically opposite to the idea, entertained by statesmen, especially in an age of incredulity, concerning the utility of religion. In their eyes, it must needs be intimately connected with the interests of society. This life is the end, religion, a means. The Christians, on the contrary, regarded life as the means of attaining an ulterior end. Their enthusiasm for a future world detached them from the cares of the present, from all concern with the fleeting and transitory interests of this life. The love of country, which is always talked of by governments, in proportion as country ceases to exist, was threatened by their contempt of terrestrial things. This was imputed to them as a crime; and the accusation has been reproduced by the pen of their modern detracters. But what was the country, from which they were charged with detaching themselves? Can we give the name of country to that immense empire, the shapeless assemblage of a thousand nations, which were bound together in fetters rather than joined in mutual union, and which had nothing in common with each other but the same misery under the same yoke?

The means employed by authority against opinion, are the same in all countries and in every age; namely, accusations, persecutions, and punishments. The effects of these means, also, are always the same; the

oppressed obtain the sympathy of all worthy and generous souls. In the bosom of adversity, in the presence of death, they exhibit sublime examples of constancy and devotion. Allow that the frequency of persecutions or the number of martyrs has been sometimes exaggerated. Is their courage the less admirable for that? It is a poor impartiality which stands between the executioners and their victims.

The rigorous measures, then, of authority against Christianity accelerate its progress. There is something contagious in the spectacle of disinterestedness, of intrepidity, and of hope, in the midst of a corrupt and degenerate age.

Persecution has this characteristic, that when it does not excite revolt, it is unnecessary; the people which suffers it is not to be feared. When it is necessary, it excites revolt, and by this fact becomes useless.

To this consideration, which is applicable to Christianity as well as to all opinions that are proscribed or threatened, let us add another circumstance peculiar to that epoch; we mean, the contradictions in which authority was involved, because it was conscious that it was sustained by no moral force. Galerius, one of the most ferocious enemies of Christianity, breaking off at once in his career of tyranny and blood, finished a writing in which he accorded a temporary toleration to the Christians, by requesting them to intercede for him with the Divinity which they adored; a singular proof of the slender conviction of the polytheists, even the most violent, in their efforts to reinstate the vanquished religion, and of the secret instinct, which led

them towards the belief, which was the object of their rage.

The priesthood could gain no greater success over the new religion than authority. It was in vain that it gathered its scattered forces, and formed heterogeneous alliances against the common enemy; it was in vain that it appealed to all the doctrines, which, at various epochs, had crept into the religion which it wished to defend,—doctrines which for a long time, it had rejected. By a mistake sufficiently natural, it believed that its strength would be increased by the number and the diversity of its troops, while this very number and the motley character of its auxiliaries, in fact, brought it into still greater discredit.

It attempted to preserve or to restore its dominion over the mind of the people, by multiplying the practices and the traditions, to which it endeavored to give an air of antiquity. So far from reforming what was indecent in its mysteries, which had become almost public, it rather calculated on their indecency, as entitling them to the support of the corruption of the age. It introduced into these mysteries every personal infliction by the side of every obscenity; sanguinary practices, mutilations, voluntary punishments were imposed as a duty upon the initiated.

And at the same time, the priests of the ancient religion, half philosophers and half conjurers, rather proposed their doctrines than enforced them; their rites were frightful, their language timid. They carried their hesitation even into their anathemas, and raising one hand to hurl the thunderbolt, they signified with the other, that they were ready for a compromise;

but no compromise was possible. They offered a place to the new God among the ancient Divinities. The followers of Christ, indignant at the idea, which they looked upon as a sacrilege, compelled their adversaries to combat, when they wished to negotiate.

It has been attempted, in our own day, to commend polytheism for this tolerance, this sweetness, this conciliatory disposition; in fact, disarmed or rather annihilated, as it was, at that epoch, its appearance was less violent, its style more gracious than that of the rising Christianity; but this was because Christianity had a real existence, while polytheism was only a vain shadow. Its forbearance, its moderation, its gentleness, all the qualities which are admired in it, were only the virtues of the dead. Men recommenced struggle, because they recommenced life; and instead of seeking an accusation against Christianity in this energetic struggle, we ought to yield it the merit of having restored the life of the soul and awakened the dust of the tomb.

While the Christians advanced, surrounded with incontestable miracles, because they were inspired with an unwavering conviction, their rivals opposed them with factitious prodigies, puerile, uncertain and faded copies of those which they imitated; for they imitated Christianity, in order to resist it, thinking to combat it with its own weapons. It is one of the misfortunes and blunders of the vanquished, to infer from the victories of their adversaries, the power of their means; and to avail themselves of these means, without examining whether they be not indebted for their force to the end for which they are employed.

The Christians had on their side both reasoning and faith. When they directed the power of reasoning against their adversaries, they had no fear of compromising their own cause. It had a protector in Heaven and it could not be compromised. The pagans also attempted to make use of reasoning and of enthusiasm; but their enthusiasm was feeble and forced; their reasoning reacted upon themselves, and caused more injury to what they asserted than to what they wished to call in question.

We have already spoken of the fraction of philosophers, who undertook to sustain the ruined edifice of polytheism, and have pointed out the cause which blasted their efforts with an incurable impotence.

As to the populace, it cried out; the Christians to the beasts! as it will soon cry out; the Pagans to the stake! It tore men in pieces, or delighted to see them torn in pieces, in the name of Jupiter; as it will soon delight to see them torn in pieces, in the name of Homoousia or Homoiousia. It showed itself, what it always is, drunken with fury, in favor of force, wherever it is perceived; and exhibiting the same fury and falling into the same madness on the opposite side, when force passes from one party to the other.

Clear and consistent, simple and precise, calming the terrestrial passions which the human race possesses in superabundance, rescuing it from the atmosphere of corruption where it breathed with difficulty and with a profound disgust at itself, taking hold of all ancient recollections; of philosophy, by the doctrines, whose purity it preserved, by diminishing their subtilty; of history, by the traditions of a people, whose ancient

splendor it consecrated, without proposing them as models of imitation; of time-hallowed usages, by freeing them from whatever was trivial, rigid and hostile; delivering reason from the interminable difficulties of dialectics; speaking to the soul the language, which it craves to hear, Christianity must needs have triumphed over an assemblage of enemies, with no agreement among themselves, with no fixed system, with no resources but brute force, and with a presentiment of their defeat, at the very moment, when they employed the most atrocious measures to retard it.

In fact, therefore, it gained the victory. A new order of things commenced for man; and this order of things, sent down as it were from Heaven by an Almighty hand, after regenerating the corrupted nations, softened and civilized those which were barbarous.

Undoubtedly, the imperfections of human nature, almost from the beginning, introduced a pernicious element into this vast system of amelioration.

The intolerance, which under the reign of polytheism, seemed an exception to its fundamental principles, appeared for a long time to be the permanent spirit of Christianity. The priesthood assumed an authority similar to that which had bent the greater number of ancient nations under its yoke; and extended this fearful authority over countries which had hitherto escaped its despotism. Morality, forced and corrupted, was made dependent on subtile interpretations and arbitrary precepts. The human faculties were bound in immobility, and were unable to recover, we will not say their legitimate freedom, which had always been disputed, but the very right of existence,

except under persecution which fell upon the most courageous and enlightened individuals.

Let us look at these difficulties, however, a little nearer. Will they not all be found in the polytheism of nations under the power of sacerdotal corporations?

Transport the faith and the priests of Egypt to Madrid or Goa, you will have inquisitors, in the name of Isis and Horus, who yield to none of their modern colleagues in ferocity or in hypocrisy; and you will have besides, human sacrifices, licentious orgies, revolting ceremonies, which have never polluted Christianity, even in its most corrupt form.

Still further, the philosophers who have extolled the tolerance of polytheism have fallen, perhaps involuntarily, into a strange error; the tolerance of which they boast in this faith does not repose on the respect which is due from society to the opinions of individuals. The people of different nations, though tolerant of each other, were yet far from recognising the eternal principle, which is the only foundation of all enlightened tolerance, that every one has the right to adore his God in the way which seems best to himself. The citizens, on the contrary, were bound to conform to the worship of the state; they were not allowed the liberty of adopting a foreign worship, though it was authorized in the state to the foreigners who practised it. The independence of thought, therefore, the independence of the religious sentiment gained nothing by this tolerance of polytheism.

Without doubt, the zeal of Chosroes, who would not treat with his enemies until they paid homage to his Gods; the reciprocal fury of the Tentyrites and

the Ombrites;[1] the sanguinary wars which were carried on between the inhabitants of Oxyrinchus and Cyropolis,[2] until they were forced to peace by the Romans; the hatred which divides the worshippers of Siva and Vishnu in India; the proscriptions to which the Bramins and the Buddhists were exposed by turns,—sufficiently contradict the eulogies, which, in hated of Christianity, have been lavished on the modes of worship which it supplanted. Let us say it freely; wherever the power of the priesthood has not been confined within its due limits, there has been intolerance; and if we consider the essence of different faiths, true toleration has hitherto existed only in Christianity emancipated from every foreign power. It is only in that religion, that the Supreme God, the father of all men, all love, all goodness, does not reproach his creatures for the efforts which they make to serve him with more zeal. Their errors can only excite his pity; every form of homage is equally acceptable to him, when the intentions are equally pure.

Does the other accusation rest on any better foundation? If the axiom, that we ought to obey God rather than man, has led fanatical Christians to the greatest crimes; if it has been announced under this pretext, that cruelty, refinement in punishments, forgetfulness of the bonds of blood and affection, were duties of the faithful in Christ; open the Schastabad, the Bhagavat-Gita, the books of the Zenda-vesta, you will find these disastrous precepts inculcated in a manner far more positive and more earnest, with this

[1] Juvenal. [2] Plutarch.

difference, that among the Persians and the Hindoos, this abominable morality is met with even in their sacred books, while among the Christians it is found only among those wretched commentators who falsify the texts of the Gospel, to promote the interests of their corporation or their order.

In fine, if an insolent tyranny, in the name of Christianity, which disclaims it, has sometimes shackled the flight of the human faculties, the most sacred gift of Providence,—were these faculties any more free among those polytheistic nations, which were prohibited from the least change in their belief, in the figure or the attributes of their Gods, from the slightest knowledge of writing, or participation in the sciences?

Accordingly, in whatever point of view we regard Christianity, even when corrupted by men, it is superior to the polytheism of most nations; and delivered from the corruption which is foreign to it, it has advantages which could not belong to the most perfect form of polytheism.

A gross error has been committed with regard to the meaning of an assertion, which serves as the basis of a work,[1] of which the last volume has not yet appeared.[2] From the fact that the author distinguishes religious forms from the religious sentiment, it has been pretended that he professes an equal indifference for all these forms. But on the contrary, these forms are progressive, some are always better than the others, and the best always appear at the suitable moment.

[1] *De la Religion.* [2] This was written in 1829.

And this system, it is not that of a modern writer; it is that of St. Paul, who declares in express words, that when man was still a child, he was subjected to the primary and imperfect instructions which God gave him,[1] and that this state of ignorance having passed away, God sent Christ into the world to abolish the ancient law.[2] Thus, according to the doctrine of the primitive Christians themselves, God adapts his teachings to the condition of man; his first instructions, which St. Paul designates as imperfect, were what was needed by an infant people. These instructions must disappear when the condition of infancy has ceased. Is the recognition of this progress in the manifestation of the divine goodness, a proof of irreligion? So said the Pharisees to the Apostles, the Roman Emperors to the martyrs.

[1] Gal. iv. 3. [2] Eph. ii. 15.

III.

ON THE PERFECTIBILITY OF THE HUMAN RACE.

Among the different systems, which have been followed, combated and modified, one alone appears to me to explain the enigma of our individual and social existence, one alone seems to me adapted to give an object to our labors, and a motive to our researches, to sustain us in our uncertainty and to relieve us in our discouragement. This is the system of the perfectibility of the human race. For him, who does not adopt this opinion, social order, like every thing which belongs, I will not say to man only but to the Universe, is merely one of the thousand fortuitous combinations, one of the thousand forms more or less transitory, which must perpetually destroy and replace each other, without leaving any permanent amelioration as the result. The system of perfectibility alone guaranties us against the infallible perspective of a complete destruction, which leaves no remembrance of our efforts, no trace of our success. A physical calamity, a new religion, an invasion of barbarians or some ages of uninterrupted oppression might deprive our race of every thing which elevates and ennobles it, every thing which renders it, at once, more moral, more enlightened and more happy. It is in vain that we are told of intelligence, of liberty, of philosophy; an abyss may open under our feet, savages may rush into the

midst of us, impostors may spring from our own bosom, and still more easily, our governments may be changed into tyrannies. If ideas do not possess a duration, independent of men, we may close our books, renounce our speculations, free ourselves from unfruitful sacrifices, and at the utmost confine ourselves to those useful or agreeable arts, which will give less insipidity to a life without hope, and a momentary embellishment to the present without a future. The progressive advancement of our species alone establishes a certain communication between different generations. They enrich one another without a mutual acquaintance; and this consoling opinion is so deeply engraved on the instincts of man, that each of these fleeting generations expects and finds its recompense in the esteem of distant generations which must one day tread upon its insensible ashes.

In this system, human acquisitions form an everlasting mass, to which each individual contributes his peculiar share, assured that no power can take away the slightest portion of this imperishable treasure. Thus, the friend of liberty and justice leaves to future ages the most precious part of himself; he places it beyond the reach of the ignorance which does not understand it and of the oppression which menaces it; he deposits it in a sanctuary, which degrading and ferocious passions can never approach. He who has discovered a single principle, in the solitude of meditation, he, whose hand has traced a single line of truth, may yield his life to be disposed of by nations or tyrants; he will not have existed in vain, and if time effaces even the name which designated his transitory

existence, his thought will still continue, imprinted on the indestructible aggregate, to the formation of which, nothing can do away the fact, that he has contributed. I propose, then, to inquire whether there exists in man any tendency to progress; what is the cause of this tendency; what is its nature; whether it is limited or unlimited; in fine, what obstacles retard or oppose its effects.

At all times, writers of different opinions have been engaged with these questions; but they have regarded them in such an imperfect manner, that the only effect of their labors has been to add to their obscurity. Some of these writers have been satisfied with merely speculative proofs,—a kind which is always very equivocal; while others have confined themselves to historical testimonies, and these testimonies can be easily combated by opposite testimonies. No one, as far as I know, has yet attempted to give a methodical developement to this idea; to discover, in the first place, by what law of his nature the individual is capable of progress; then to explain how this law is applicable to the species; and finally to demonstrate the constant application of this law by an appeal to facts.

Such will be the design of the following pages. I shall endeavor to be clear; and I shall be short. I shall say nothing but what appears to me absolutely indispensable.

All the impressions which man receives are transmitted to him through the senses; but they are of two kinds, or to speak more correctly, though perfectly homogeneous in their origin, they are divided into two different classes.

The first, which are sensations properly so called, are insulated and transitory, and leave no other trace of their existence than the physical effect which they produce on our organs. The others, which are formed of the remembrance of a sensation or of the combination of several sensations, are susceptible of union and permanence; we give them the name of ideas.[1] These are placed in the thinking portion of our nature, they exist there in a connected form, they reproduce and multiply each other, so as to compose as it were a world within us,—a world, which we can represent in thought as altogether independent of the external world.

In the comparison of the influence of sensations properly so called, and of what we have designated as ideas, we are to find the solution of the problem of human perfectibility.

Man can never become master of his sensations properly so called. Some of them he can remove, others he can attend to, or produce at pleasure; but they cannot be sustained, they entirely pass away, they form no connexion with each other. A present sensation decides nothing with regard to a future sensation; that of to-day is foreign to that of to-morrow. They

[1] There is, perhaps, a metaphysical inaccuracy in the distinction here made between sensations and ideas. Ideas, in a certain relation, are also sensations combined, prolonged, preserved, recalled, separated from the action of external objects, distinguished, in a word, from primary and instantaneous sensations; but in order to express this distinction, in the shortest and most decided manner possible, we designate the latter as sensations properly so called, and the others as ideas.*

* See Note C.

do not compose a kind of property for man. In whatever number he receives them, however eagerly he multiplies them, each of them comes, passes through and disappears alone,—traverses the solitude, without peopling it.

Ideas, on the contrary, being preserved in the thinking portion of our nature, connected with and reproducing each other, constitute a genuine property for man. Undoubtedly, man is dependent on external objects, for the reception of ideas as well as of sensations; but, when once acquired, ideas remain with him, and if he cannot recall or multiply them at will, they have at least, as we have said, the inestimable advantage of recalling or multiplying one another.

If every individual governs himself, or to speak more correctly, is governed by his sensations properly so called, and it is the will of nature that they should command or even merely balance the influence of ideas, there can be no hope of any progress. Ideas can be ameliorated; but not sensations. On this hypothesis, we have always been what we now are; and we now are what we always shall be.

If, on the contrary, man is governed by ideas, progress is secured. Even when our actual ideas are false, they contain the germ of new combinations, of rectifications more or less prompt, but infallible, and of uninterrupted improvement.

We must not regard the question which we are now considering, as a common-place of morality; it is a fact, which needs to be explained. We are not about to repeat the old adage, which every age has spoken, that man ought to free himself from the

dominion of the senses and follow the light of reason; we would inquire as to what he actually does, not what he ought to do.

Whether he is governed by his sensations properly so called, or by what we designate as ideas, that is to say, by the remembrance and combination of his past sensations, his conduct is in accordance with his nature; he will not deviate from that and he cannot do so; only, as we have already said, if the dominion be given to sensations, the human race will be stationary; if to ideas, it will be progressive.

Now the most superficial examination may suffice to convince us that man is governed, exclusively and absolutely, by ideas, and that unless a sudden and violent shock deprives him of the use of all his faculties, he always sacrifices the present sensation to the remembrance of a past sensation or to the hope of a future one, that is to say, to an idea. The facts, which we relate in common discourse, as a proof of the power of sensations are, in reality, a proof of the power of ideas. This is not a chimerical refinement. When Leander swims over the Hellespont for the sake of meeting Hero, he sustains an actual pain in the hope of a future pleasure; and, in doing this, he sacrifices a sensation to an idea. These sacrifices are constantly repeated in every body's life; and the most selfish, the most sensual individuals submit to them as frequently, or to speak more correctly, as constantly, as the most generous and disinterested.

We may infer from this that there exists in human nature a disposition, by which it is always enabled to sacrifice the present to the future, and consequently a sensation to an idea.

The process is the same in the laborious workman who wearies himself with toil to support his family; in the miser who endures cold and hunger to preserve his gold; in the lover who braves fatigue and tempest to win the heart of his mistress; in the ambitious man who rejects sleep or neglects a wound in the service of his country; in the noble-minded citizen who watches, combats and suffers, for its safety. There exists in all the possibility of sacrifice; there exists in all, in a word, the dominion of ideas over sensations.

Man therefore is not governed by sensations properly so called; on the contrary, he is engaged in a perpetual struggle with them, in which he always conquers; and it might be demonstrated that the life of the most feeble, of the most voluptuous, of the most effeminate Sybarite is an uninterrupted series of triumphs of this character.

Man, then, though essentially modified by external impressions, is not bound, in a passive and absolute dependence on these impressions. He constantly opposes the impression of yesterday to that of to day, and for the slightest causes, for the most trivial interests, he daily goes through an operation sufficient for the most sublime acts of disinterestedness and heroism. If this be the case, we ought no longer to oppose the power of sensations to that of ideas; we should speak only of the comparative power of ideas, in relation to each other. Now, the power of ideas is the power of reasoning; for in all the sacrifices, which are so common in the lives of all of us, that we are unconscious of them ourselves, there is comparison and consequently reasoning.

When the most sensual of men abstains from drinking to excess of a delicious wine, on account of his mistress, there is sacrifice, consequently comparison. Now to impel this man to noble, generous and useful actions, nothing is needed but to improve his faculty of comparison.

We have thus gained a great point. It is no longer the nature of man which we must bring into subjection, it is no longer his sensations which we must overcome; it is only his reason which must be improved. It is no longer the problem to create a foreign power within him, but to develope and enlarge a power which he already possesses.

In order to deny this assertion, you must deny the series of facts, which we have adduced; and this appears to be impossible. It is not sensations which govern the actions of men, it is ideas. They are always accompanied with comparison, with judgment. The nature of man is so inclined to sacrifice, that a present sensation is almost infallibly sacrificed when it is in opposition to a future sensation, that is to say, to an idea.

The power which Zeno, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, ascribed to man over his own existence, is nothing but the developement of this truth. It is the supremacy of ideas over sensations, in other words, the assertion that man is able to overcome the impressions which he receives, by the remembrance, the combination, the employment, in a word, of the impressions, which he has received.

Since Socrates,—to use a consecrated expression,—made philosophy descend from heaven to assume a place on earth, and applied it to our daily affec-

tions, and our hourly interests, the sages of antiquity have studied man in every point of view. They have found, as the result of their inquiries, that ideas must prevail over sensations, that in proportion as the former are multiplied, developed and perfected, their dominion is incontestable; and they have hence inferred, with regard to the human race, the possibility of a moral independence, unlimited and complete.

All their efforts tend to consolidate the dominion of ideas over sensations, to render man master of himself, to secure to him, at all times, that moral independence, as the source of dignity, repose and happiness.

There are many causes,—and among them I place in the highest rank, the arbitrary character of the ancient monarchies,—which have deprived us of this independence, by making us the victims of effeminacy and corruption. As we have now become free, we ought to recover our strength. We should regard the will of man as the essence of his personality and as omnipotent over physical nature. His organs, his sensations, this physical nature are his primary instruments. With the aid of the last, he conquers foreign objects, and of these objects he makes secondary instruments; but previously, he must be secure of the conquest of his primary instruments, and obtain the absolute possession of them. He must be master within, before he is so without. Even his passions may be made the instruments of his will. They may be the means, by the aid of which, we may give an impulse to our organs, while we take care that they do not pass beyond our control, just as they who have

recourse to spirituous liquors to fortify their strength, do not yield to their excitement so far as to lose the mastery over themselves.

The single faculty of sacrifice contains the indestructible germ of perfectibility. In proportion as man exercises this faculty, it acquires greater energy; he embraces within his horizon, a greater number of objects. Now error always proceeds from the absence of some element which is essential to truth; it is rectified by completing the number of necessary elements. Hence man must every day gain a higher degree of correctness.

The improvement which is thus effected in the individual is communicated to the species, because certain truths, which are constantly and universally repeated, at length come to be surrounded with a full and immediate evidence; for an evident truth is nothing but a truth, of which the sign is so familiar to us, that it recalls, in a moment, the intellectual operation, by which that truth obtained our assent.

The only problem in moral truths, no less than in arithmetical, is to simplify the signs. If we apprehend at once, without calculation, that two and two make four, and if we do not apprehend with the same rapidity that sixty-nine and one hundred and eighty-seven make two hundred and fifty-six, it is not because the first of these propositions is more incontestable than the other, but because the sign of two repeated twice recalls the idea which it designates more promptly than the union of the signs of sixty-nine and of one hundred and eighty-seven.

The combination of these truths, adopted by all

individuals, and the habit of sacrifice which these truths impose upon them, give birth to a reason, establish a morality common to all, of which the principles, received without discussion, are never called in question. The individual is then no longer obliged to recommence a task which has been completed before him; he starts, not from the point on which he is placed by his individual experience, but from the point to which he is led by the experience of the mass.

At the same time, that the perfectibility of man is acting within him, by leading him, slowly without doubt, in an imperceptible manner, from truths which are known to those which are yet obscure, it is acting externally, by leading him in like manner, from one discovery to another.

By taking distant epochs of history, we can point out the progress of internal and external perfectibility.

For internal, that is to say, for moral perfectibility, we have the abolition of slavery, which for us is an evident truth, but which was the contrary for Aristotle.

In the struggle of the French Revolution, the most inveterate aristocrats did not think of proposing the reëstablishment of slavery, while Plato in his ideal Republic did not suppose that it could be dispensed with.

Such is the progress of the human mind, that the most absurd individuals, even in spite of themselves, cannot now be carried back to the point, which was held by the most enlightened ages of the past. When reason and time have done complete justice to a false

institution, even folly and personal interest do not dare to call it back.

For external perfectibility, we have a multitude of discoveries; those of Galileo, Copernicus, and Newton; the circulation of the blood, electricity, and a host of machines which every day increase the mastery of man over the material world; gunpowder, the compass, the art of printing, steam, physical means for the conquest of the world.

This march of perfectibility can be suspended, and even the human race apparently forced to retrograde; but it tends to recover the point which it has lost, and it does recover it, as soon as the material cause which acted upon it, ceases to operate.

Thus the convulsions of the French Revolution confused men's ideas and corrupted their characters; but as soon as these convulsions were stilled, men returned to the ideas of morality, which they professed just before the shocks which threw them into disorder; so that we may say that the excesses of the Revolution perverted the minds of individuals, but did not substitute for the prevailing system of morality, one which was less perfect; but it is precisely this which must be proved, in order to demonstrate that the human race has grown worse.

The case is the same with regard to what we have called external perfectibility.

Man has gained a far greater number of instruments for acting on external objects and subduing them to his will than he ever had before. This is an advancement for the whole race. Take a hundred men, at random, among any people of antiquity that

you please, and a hundred men, among the European nations of modern times; place each of these bands, with the discoveries of its epoch in a desert isle, bristling with rocks and forests; the hundred men of antiquity will perish or return to the savage state, for want of the means of tillage; while the hundred men of modern times will reinstate themselves, by their labors, on the point from which they were taken, and will soon leave it to go to a still more elevated degree of civilization. This difference would grow out of certain physical discoveries, the use of gunpowder, for instance. Now, we cannot deny that this would be a genuine advancement for the human race. The saying of Vauban, which is quoted against perfectibility, proves, on the contrary, in its favor. If Cæsar should return to-day and find himself in five days on a level with the most able men, actually existing, that is to say, far above his own age, would it not be a demonstration that our species starts from a higher point and consequently goes further than then?

They who are unwilling to admit this progressive march suppose that the human race is doomed perpetually to describe a circle, and by an everlasting alternation, to pass from ignorance to knowledge and from knowledge to ignorance, from the savage state to the civilized and from the civilized state to the savage. This is because they confine their attention to certain portions of the earth, to certain communities more or less limited, to certain individuals remarkable either in their age or their country. But the system of perfectibility cannot be properly estimated, unless it is submitted to an impartial judgment. It is of little

consequence, that such a people, at such an epoch, has enjoyed more happiness or possessed more light, than another people, at a subsequent epoch, if it be demonstrated that the mass of men existing together at a specific time is always more happy than the mass of men existing together at a previous time.

We should not say, the Athenians were freer than ourselves; therefore the human race has lost in point of liberty. The Athenians were a small portion of the inhabitants of Greece. Greece, a small portion of Europe, while the rest of the world was barbarous, and the immense majority of the inhabitants of Greece itself was composed of slaves. Let there be shown in history an epoch similar to our own, taken on a large scale. The whole of Europe is free from the scourge of slavery; three quarters of this portion of the globe have shaken off the yoke of feudalism; a moiety delivered from the privileges of the nobility. Among a hundred and twenty millions of men, there is not one who legally possesses the power of life and death over another. Even in those countries, where philosophy as yet has no influence, toleration is enjoined by religion. Despotism every where veils its crimes with pretexts, that are ridiculous without doubt, but which indicate a modesty hitherto unknown. Usurpation makes the plea of necessity; error is justified as useful.

I have spoken elsewhere of four great revolutions, which are presented to our notice, even to this day; the destruction of theocracy, that of slavery, that of feudalism, that of the nobility, as a privileged order. I am led by my subject to add some further develope-

ments. These four revolutions present to us a series of gradual ameliorations; they are the steps of a regular progress.

A privileged nobility is nearer ourselves than feudalism, feudalism than slavery, slavery than theocracy. If we would make nobility more oppressive, we must change it into feudalism; if we would make feudalism more odious, we must change it into slavery; if we would make slavery more execrable, we must change it into theocracy; and by an inverse course, in order to soften the condition of castes, which are prescribed by theocracy, we should elevate these castes to the rank of slaves; to diminish the degradation of slaves, we should grant them the imperfect guarantee of serfs; to emancipate the serfs, we should accord to them the independence of commoners. Every step, in this progress, has been made without the possibility of a return. Is it not evident, then, that an advancement like this is a law of nature, and that each of these epochs contains the elements of future epochs, by which it must be displaced?

The duration of theocracy is unknown to us; but it is probable that this detestable institution existed longer than slavery. We see slavery in force for more than three thousand years, feudalism for eleven hundred years, the privileges of the nobility without feudalism for scarcely two centuries.

It is with the destruction of abuses as with the accelerated velocity of falling bodies; the nearer they approach the earth, the more rapidly they fall. This is because it is far easier to sustain abuses, when they are gross and unmitigated, for, in that case, they more

completely degrade their victims. It was easier to sustain slavery than feudalism, and feudalism than nobility. When the whole nature and existence of man are shackled, he is far more incapable of resistance, than when only a portion is so. The hand which remains free delivers the other from its chains.

History points out to us the establishment of Christianity and the irruption of the northern barbarians, as the causes of the destruction of slavery; the crusades, as the cause of the destruction of feudalism; and the French Revolution, as that of the destruction of the privileges of the nobility.

But the destruction of these abuses was not the accidental effect of particular circumstances; the invasion of the barbarians, the establishment of Christianity, the crusades, the French Revolution, were the occasion, but not the cause. The human race was ripe for these successive deliverances. The everlasting force of things brought on these revolutions in their turn. That which we take for the immediate effect of an unforeseen circumstance is an era of the human mind; and the man or the event which appears to us to have caused it, has only shared more visibly in the general impulse which was felt by the whole current of society.

These four revolutions, the destruction of theocratic slavery, of civil slavery, of feudalism, of a privileged nobility, are so many steps towards the reëstablishment of natural equality. The perfectibility of the human race is nothing but the tendency towards equality.

This tendency proceeds from the fact that equality alone is conformable to truth, that is to say, to the

mutual relations of things and to the mutual relations of men.

Inequality is that which alone constitutes injustice. If we analyze all the general or particular forms of injustice, we shall find that they all have their foundation in inequality.

Whenever man begins to reflect, and by means of reflection, attains to that power of sacrifice, which constitutes his perfectibility, he takes equality as his starting-point; for he gains the conviction that he ought not to do to others what he would not that they should do to him, that is to say, that he ought to treat others as his equals, and that he has the right not to suffer from others what they would not suffer from him; that is to say, that others ought to treat him as their equal.[1]

It follows from this that whenever a truth is discovered,—and truth tends, by its nature to be discovered,—man approaches equality.

If he remains so long at a distance from it, it is because the need of supplying the truths of which he is ignorant, has driven him towards ideas that are more or less fantastic, opinions that are more or less erroneous. He needs a certain stock of opinions and ideas to put in action the physical forces, which are nothing but passive instruments. Ideas only are active. They are the sovereigns of the world. The empire of the Universe has been given to them. Accordingly, whenever there are not a sufficient number of truths in the human mind to serve as a lever to physical forces, man supplies their place by conjectures and errors. Whenever the truth afterwards makes its

[1] See Note D.

appearance, the erroneous opinions which held its place vanish away, and it is the temporary struggle which they maintain—a struggle which always ends in their annihilation,—that changes the conditions of states, throws nations into agitation, dashes individuals in pieces, produces, in a word, what we call revolutions.

From this we may derive several important consequences.

1. It is incontestable that the majority of the human race, by a regular and uninterrupted[1] progress, advances every day in happiness and especially in knowledge.

It always goes forward with a more or less rapid step. If, sometimes, it seems, for a moment, to retrograde, it is in order to react immediately on the powerless obstacle which it soon overcomes. If this truth were demonstrated only in relation to knowledge, the perfectibility of man would be equally proved; for if happiness be the immediate, and amelioration the distant end, knowledge is the means; and in proportion, as we acquire the means of attaining an end, we, in fact, approach the end itself, even when we do not appear to do so.

[1] The career of the human race may be divided into three parts.

1. The established part.
2. The doubtful part.
3. The unknown part.

It never returns to the established part. When it is thought to retrograde, it only vibrates within certain limits in the doubtful part. In proportion as it advances, the doubtful part becomes established, the unknown part becomes doubtful.

2. The human race, since it is not stationary, can judge only in a relative manner of that which is not inherent in its nature, of that which it does not bear within itself, but which it uses in its path, as a supplemental and temporary resource. Thus, among opinions and institutions,—for institutions in their origin are only opinions carried into practice—those which we have now considered may have had in their day a certain utility, necessity, relative perfection. Thus also those which we now regard as indispensable, and which are so for us, may in a few centuries be discarded as abuses. Let us not, however, conclude, that because the greater part of abuses have had their season of utility, we should carefully preserve those which exist in the midst of us. Nature alone is charged with the work of creating and preserving useful abuses. The human race never parts with what it really needs. When an abuse is destroyed, it is because its utility has ceased; but it cannot be said, that when an abuse is not destroyed, it is because its utility continues; for there may be other causes.

The relative utility of institutions varies with every day, because every day reveals to us a little more of truth. The useful abuse of today is the useless abuse of tomorrow. Now, every useless abuse is pernicious, both as an obstacle to the progress of our race, and as an occasion of strife between individuals.

It is almost always by a great evil that the revolutions which tend to the good of humanity are produced. The more pernicious is the thing to be destroyed, the more cruel is the evil of the revolution. The reason is that no very pernicious institution

can be introduced, unless it be or appear to be very necessary at the epoch of its introduction. Now, the remembrance of this necessity survives the necessity itself, and presents an obstinate resistance to whatever tends to destroy the institution, even after it has ceased to be necessary. To prove that an abuse is the foundation of the existing social order, is not to justify the abuse. Whenever there is an abuse in the social order, it appears to be the foundation of it, because being heterogeneous and solitary in its nature, it is necessary for its preservation, that every thing should yield to it, that it should be the centre of every thing, and hence that every thing should rest upon it. No doubt, when slavery was in force, the subjection of the class which cultivated the earth, which alone was charged with all the labor, which secured to its masters the leisure essential to elegance of manners and the acquisition of knowledge, was regarded as the foundation of social order. Under the empire of feudalism, the dependence of the serfs seemed inseparable from the public safety. In our own days, the privileges of the nobility have been claimed as the sole guarantee of national prosperity. Nevertheless, slavery has been destroyed, and social order preserved. Feudalism has been prostrated, and social order has not suffered from its fall. We have seen the privileges of the nobility overthrown, and if social order has been weakened, the fault is not to be charged upon the destruction of those privileges, but upon the forgetfulness of principles, the prevalence of corruption, the dominion of folly, the delirium

which for a long time appeared by turns to seize all who were in possession of power.

The destruction of the privileges of the nobility is the commencement of a new epoch,—the epoch of legal conventions.

The human mind has too much light to suffer any longer the government of force or fraud, but not enough for the government of reason alone. It needs something which is at once more reasonable than force and less abstract than reason. Hence the necessity of legal conventions, that is to say, of a kind of common and acknowledged reason, the average product of the collective reason of different individuals, more imperfect than that of some, more perfect than that of many others, and which compensates the disadvantage of subjecting enlightened minds to the errors which they have thrown off, by the advantage of elevating grosser minds to truths which they would have been incapable as yet of comprehending.

In treating of legal conventions, we should never lose sight of a first principle, namely, that these conventions are not natural or immutable things, but factitious, susceptible of change, created to take the place of truths which are yet little known, to supply temporary wants; and consequently to be amended, perfected, and above all restrained, in proportion as these truths are discovered or as these wants are modified.

It may perhaps be asked why we designate the present epoch as that of legal conventions; since there have been such conventions in every age. It is because this epoch is the first in which legal conventions have

existed independently and without mixture. Undoubtedly there have always been legal conventions, since man can never dispense with laws; but these conventions were only secondary things; there were prejudices, errors, and superstitions which sanctioned them, which held the first rank, and which thus characterize the preceding epochs. It is only at the present day, that man, recognising the right of no occult power to control his reason, wishes to consult that alone, and at the most submits to conventions which proceed from an agreement with the reason of his fellows.

We believe that we have proved by reasoning the perfectibility of the human race, and by facts, the progress of the human race in the different developements of this faculty by which it is distinguished.

Nature has given man a direction which the most barbarous tyrants, the most insolent usurpers, cannot prevent.

The human race has not gone back under the senseless tyranny of the Roman Emperors; it has not gone back, even when the twofold plague of gross feudalism and degrading superstition rested on the enslaved Universe. After these memorable examples, the great work of our degradation must be despaired of.

Si Pergama dextrâ
Defendi possent, etiam hâc defensâ fuissent.

It were desirable that this conviction should force itself upon rulers, of every country and of every character. It would spare them bloody struggles and fruitless efforts. Let us, at least, who are not deaf

to the voice of experience, and who find in the study of the ages, such striking proofs of this decisive truth, let us not despond at accidental hindrances. Certain as we are of our ideas, trusting as we do in nature, we are little moved by the perversity of tyrants or the degradation of slaves; we still have an infallible appeal to reason and to time.

NOTES ON BENJAMIN CONSTANT.

NOTES

TO THE TRANSLATIONS FROM

BENJAMIN CONSTANT.

NOTE A. Page 301.

HISTORICAL PARALLELS.

"This would not be the only advantage of regarding religion in the manner above described. It would explain, moreover, many events which seem to be the effects of chance, or which we ascribe to partial causes, while they are the necessary results of an inevitable progress. Thus when we see Cyrus and Bonaparte in the same position, both conquerors of an ancient kingdom, whose political as well as whose religious institutions were hostile to their power, we should be able to perceive the reason why one, by a negotiation with the Magi, established the religion of Zoroaster as the religion of his Court, in the midst of the gross conceptions of his half-savage Persians; and why the other pursued almost the same course in relation to Catholicism, in the midst of national incredulity. We should find in the sudden persecution of the Christians, by the colleague of Galerius, in the hesitation of that emperor, in the zeal of his courtiers, in the fury of the priests of the ancient worship, many characteristic traits of the revocation

of the edict of Nantes. We should learn that Julian has not remained without imitators. Modern times and ancient times would mutually illustrate each other." *De la Religion*, Vol. I. p. 151. Paris, 1824.

NOTE B. Page 303.

ANCIENT AND MODERN PRIESTHOOD.

"It would give us great pain, we confess, to be confounded with that crowd of writers, who, impelled by a brutal violence, or a vanity by no means scrupulous in its choice of means, rudely attack every object which commands the respect of the human race. The force of evidence, however, has constrained us to speak with a severity which we believe to be just, concerning the influence of the sacerdotal order among most of the ancient nations. To suggest that we speak only of the people of antiquity and the priests of polytheism, would be to evade attack, rather than to repel it. It is better to express our whole mind at once; it contains nothing which we are afraid to avow; and we shall gain the advantage of not being suspected of taking refuge in allusions,—a kind of attack always somewhat timid, and which combines with the evil of perverting facts, that of giving hostility an unworthy appearance of fear.

Among our accusations against the sacerdotal order of the ancients, and its action on the civilization of that epoch, many are altogether inapplicable to the priests of modern religions.

In the first place, the priests of antiquity were doomed to imposture by their very functions. Marvellous communications to be maintained with the Gods, illusions to be produced, oracles to be announced, made fraud necessary.

Our purified faith has delivered the priests of the present day from those corrupting obligations. Organs of prayer, consolers of affliction, confidants of penitence, they have not, happily for them, any miraculous offices. Such is the progress of light among us, and the calm which is given to the mind, by our less material doctrines, that even fanaticism, when it exists, is forced to respect the barriers, which it was the essential character of the ancient priesthood to violate, and beyond which, it found the seat of its influence.

Secondly, the unlimited power of the Druids or of the Magi can never be shared by the priests of modern times. Inclined as we are to conceive alarm at the tendency of the priesthood to form a distinct body in the State, we should regard it as carrying our jealousy too far, if we supposed that the prerogatives which it possesses, or those which it might occasionally usurp, could place it on a level with those orders which domineered over royalty, hurled kings from the throne, took possession of every branch of knowledge, formed a separate language for itself, made a monopoly of the art of writing, and judges, physicians, historians, poets, philosophers, closed the sanctuary of science to all who did not share in their privilege, that is, to the immense majority of the human race.

Nothing which we have said of the immense power of the theocratic corporations of India, of Ethiopia, or of the West, can be perverted by any of our readers, into attacks upon the priests of those communions to which we owe respect as citizens and attachment as Protestants." [1]

[1] *De la Religion*, Preface.

NOTE C. Page 349.

PSYCHOLOGICAL ERROR.

The psychological confusion in this passage must be evident to every intelligent reader. It proceeds from the defective philosophy of Benjamin Constant, whose strong feeling of a higher order of ideas than those which are suggested by the outward senses, had never been verified by a scientific analysis and shown to have its foundation in the immutable principles of reason. The student of Kant or of Cousin will not be in danger of renewing the task, which has been so fruitlessly labored on by the Sensual philosophy, of resolving the most elevated ideas of the human race into the products of sensation, more or less transformed.

NOTE D. Page 362.

EQUALITY.

A similar train of thought in regard to the natural equality of man is contained in the following exquisite passage, which though familiar to the readers of Wordsworth, I cannot resist the temptation of introducing in this connexion.

> "Alas! what differs more than man from man!
> And whence that difference? whence but from himself?
> For see the universal Race endowed
> With the same upright form!—The sun is fixed,

And the infinite magnificence of heaven,
Within the reach of every human eye;
The sleepless Ocean murmurs for all ears;
The vernal field infuses fresh delight
Into all hearts. Throughout the world of sense
Even as an object is sublime or fair,
That object is laid open to the view
Without reserve or veil; and as a power
Is salutary, or an influence sweet,
Are each and all enabled to perceive
That power, that influence, by impartial law.
Gifts nobler are vouchsafed alike to all;
Reason,—and, with that reason, smiles and tears;
Imagination, freedom in the will,
Conscience to guide and check; and death to be
Foretasted, immortality presumed.
Strange, then, nor less than monstrous might be deemed
The failure, if the Almighty, to this point
Liberal and undistinguishing, should hide
The excellence of moral qualities
From common understanding; leaving truth
And virtue, difficult, abstruse, and dark;
Hard to be won, and only by a few;
Strange, should he deal herein with nice respects,
And frustrate all the rest! Believe it not:
The primal duties shine aloft—like stars;
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,
Are scattered at the feet of Man—like flowers.
The generous inclination, the just rule,
Kind wishes, and good actions, and pure thoughts—
No mystery is here; no special boon
For high and not for low, for proudly graced
And not for meek of heart. The smoke ascends
To heaven as lightly from the cottage hearth
As from the haughty palace. He, whose soul
Ponders this true equality, may walk
The fields of earth with gratitude and hope;
Yet, in that meditation, will he find

Motive to sadder grief, as we have found,—
Lamenting ancient virtues overthrown,
And for the injustice grieving, that hath made
So wide a difference betwixt Man and Man."

WORDSWORTH'S *Excursion*, Book IX.

THE END.

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